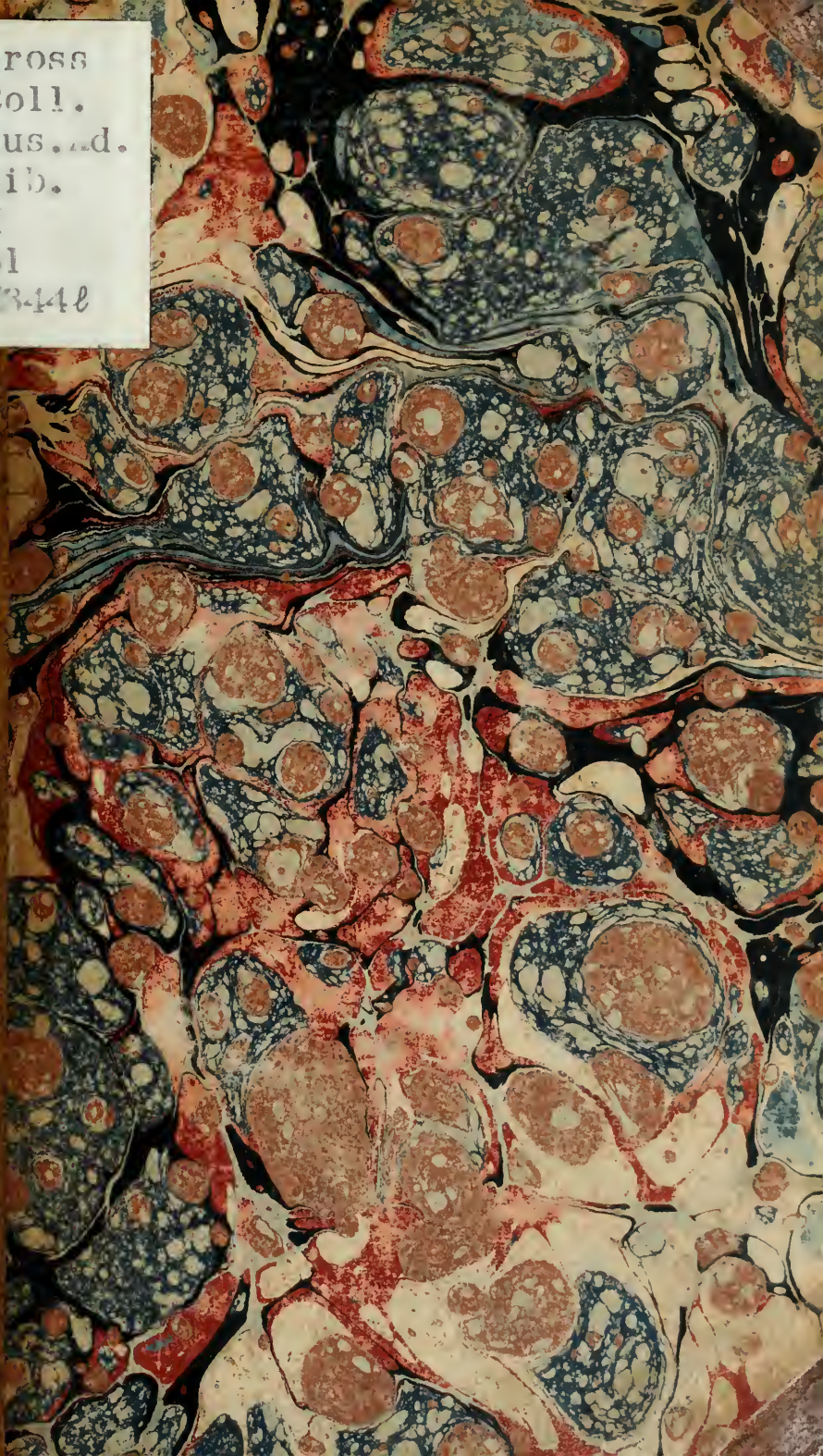


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# LECTURES

ON THE

## ELEMENTS

OF

### COMMERCE, POLITICS, AND FINANCES;

Intended as a Companion to *Blackstone's Commentaries on  
the Laws of England*;

And peculiarly calculated to qualify Young Noblemen  
and Gentlemen for Situations in any of the Public  
Offices under Government, and for Parliamentary  
Business.

---

By THOMAS MORTIMER, Esq.

AUTHOR OF SEVERAL APPROVED COMMERCIAL, HISTORICAL,  
AND MISCELLANEOUS WORKS.

---

LONDON:

*Printed by A. Strahan, Printers-Street;*

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1801.





51  
Moira

TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
THE EARL OF MOIRA,  
Esq. Esq. Esq.

MY LORD,

IF from the illustrious body of British Peers, I presumed to select your Lordship, as the distinguished character to whom I wished for the honour of dedicating the following pages; let me assure you, and my readers in general, that neither partiality, nor self-interest had any share in determining me to solicit your Lordship's patronage; consequently, it will be sufficient for my purpose, to assign the motives that justify, in a peculiar manner, the propriety of this address.

Commerce, as connected with sound policy, is recommended in the first division of my Lectures, to the attention of every British senator; and it is evident that your Lordship has made it a part of your early studies, since, from that

source, you have been enabled to stand forth a powerful advocate for the *mitigation* of those cruel and impolitic laws, which authorize merciless creditors to confine thousands of their useful fellow subjects, “ for an unlimited time, often for life,” in prison.

May your Lordship’s success be equal to your benevolent exertions ; my sentiments on the subject, which will be found in the Lecture, “ On the administration of commercial affairs,” were first promulgated in the year 1772.

The Elements of the science of Politics, collected from the best authorities ancient and modern, including an analysis of the British constitution in its original purity : and an inquiry into the adulterations, which the modern maxims of *political necessity*, and *existing circumstances* have introduced, equally claim your Lordship’s protection ; for, upon various occasions, you have publicly avowed an inviolable attachment to that excellent constitution, and a decided resolution to support the civil and religious rights of the community, against every unconstitutional encroachment of arbitrary ministers.

Lastly, at this critical juncture, when political economy is imperiously required, to repair the damages of unprecedented profusion in the national expenditure, an explanation of the true principles on which the revenues of the British Empire ought to be levied and administered, cannot fail of attracting the regard of a nobleman, whose time and talents are so assiduously devoted to the good of his country.

That you may enjoy to the longest period of human life, the love, esteem, and confidence of our most gracious sovereign, and of your fellow-subjects, is the cordial wish of,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's

most humble and

devoted Servant,

*London,*  
*May 1st, 1801.*

THOMAS MORTIMER.





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\* *The only authentic history of the public revenues of the British Empire, 2 volumes in 4to. 1790. An 8vo. edition is much wanted and expected, brought down to the present time.*

## INTRODUCTION.

---

**T**HE present and future grandeur, fame, riches, and happiness of Great Britain, depend so entirely on the ingenuity, industry, and commercial spirit of its inhabitants, and on the wisdom of its legislature ; that no study seems more important than that which tends to convey proper ideas of those most essential subjects, COMMERCE, POLITICS, and FINANCES ; especially for those, who, by their rank, fortune, or connexions in life, may hereafter be called upon to direct and improve, or to patronize and reward the exertions of genius and honest labour in their fellow-citizens ; either by representing them in parliament, or by taking a part in the administration of government, as ministers, or magistrates. But so many qualifications are requisite to form the character of a complete British member of parliament, or statesman ; and

the life of man is so short, that it is totally impossible to devote any very considerable portion of time to the investigation of every art and science; or even to read, with attention, amidst a variety of other avocations, all the voluminous productions of the press on those interesting subjects, which are the objects of this work.

A necessity, therefore, arises of reducing those arts and sciences, the knowledge of which are likely to be most intimately connected with our stations in life, to certain concise elementary principles. This has been recommended by the ablest writers, and it has been effected with success in theology, history, law, physic, philosophy, and the mathematics, proving of singular utility to the students in each profession.

In support of the utility of the design, it may not be improper to point out the want of a work of this kind, from the complaints that have been long since made in print, of the very limited, inadequate ideas of each subject, discernible, in those whose high stations in society require the most perfect knowledge of them all. And, first, with respect to commerce.

The best writers on the maritime power and commerce of this country, concur with me in maintaining, that there is a manifest defect in the education of British youth of high rank  
and

and fortune, and of the sons of our opulent citizens, by neglecting to instruct them in this very important branch of knowledge, the commercial art. One, in particular, of great repute, has gone so far as to assert, "That though  
" we are very happy in the constitution of our  
" legislature, yet it is to be feared our parliaments have sometimes been misled, when  
" matters relative to trade have been brought  
" under their consideration." He might have added, grossly imposed on by interested merchants and traders, which has been the occasion of such frequent amendments and repeals of acts of parliament respecting commerce.

Nor is this to be wondered at, when we consider the number of nobles, gentlemen, officers of the army and navy, lawyers, and spiritual lords, in parliament, whose education has been totally foreign from all inquiry into the means of improving arts, manufactures, and commerce; yet the education of a British senator ought to be so general as to include a competent knowledge of every subject that can possibly be brought before parliament. But above all, young gentlemen should not be permitted to make the tour of Europe, till they have acquired clear ideas of the first principles of COMMERCE, POLITICS, and FINANCES. Were this rule strictly followed, their observations, in the course of their travels, would prove



highly beneficial to themselves and to their native country; for, instead of returning with the most ample accounts of cabinets of curiosities, of the rarities, of the dress, intrigues, and amusements of the different nations of Europe, they would make themselves acquainted with their commercial and political maxims; they would notice their inventions and improvements in the useful arts, and the various modes of raising, collecting, and managing their public revenues.

The errors of parliament may be rectified by amendments, or repeals of acts detrimental to commerce; but the effect of ignorance in commercial affairs becomes more fatal, when it gets possession of the administration of government, in maritime and commercial states. The history of England furnishes too many instances of the imbecility of entire administrations in this respect; the very department peculiarly charged with the inspection and care of commercial affairs, having often been filled by gentlemen, who could not lay claim to the least mercantile knowledge. When this has been the case, and that (unhappily) the superior offices of state were likewise occupied by men equally deficient in this point, foreign powers have seldom failed to avail themselves of such junctures, to seduce our artificers, artists, and manufacturers; to violate treaties

treaties of commerce, by laying heavy duties and prohibitions on our merchandize entering their respective countries, contrary to express stipulations; and, by various other means, to annoy and disturb our merchants.

In a word, so great is the advantage arising, not only to the community, but to every individual, from an early attainment of commercial knowledge, that there have been but few, if any, who were tolerably versed in it, who have not either improved their estates and fortunes, by entering into commercial connections; or raised themselves to honourable and important offices in the state. I mean this of gentlemen, whose rank, situation and patrimony, would perhaps have intitled them to step forth into public life, even without this knowledge; but who, with this addition, have been able to command respect and veneration from their fellow-citizens, and to immortalize their fame, through the signal services they have rendered their country (in the most perilous times) by a glorious administration of the public affairs of the state.

That an early study of the true principles of political wisdom is essentially necessary in a country which boasts so excellent a constitution, will scarcely be denied; nor yet, that we have been shamefully negligent on this head: indeed every man's daily observation must convince him, that the subjects of Great Britain would have been more happy, and the administration  
of

of government much easier of late years, if a false definition of politics had not so generally prevailed, which has been wholly owing to the want of instilling right ideas of this important science into the minds of youth, whereby they would be prepared to resist the bad impressions which crafty, designing men now readily make on their minds, respecting the views and conduct of the government they live under. If, from being unprincipled, we take up every vague opinion, embrace it for a time, and then exchange it as readily, when interest or ambition suggests a convenient variation, it cannot be wondered at ; for no care has been taken to inculcate that veneration for the first principles of civil society, which would animate us to a love of our country, and fire us with emulation, in the cause of civil and religious liberty, and in the support of the dignity and authority of an upright government founded on these principles. The sure method of remedying these grievances is, to make the science of politics a branch of British education, as youth advance to years of maturity. But as we have no public schools for this valuable purpose, the editor flatters himself that his Elements of Politics, may supply the want of them.

The great increase and extent of the commercial connexions of Great Britain, arising from the augmentation of her maritime power, from new territorial acquisitions, and from the flourishing  
state

state of her foreign settlements, having totally changed the face of affairs at home, and evidently given to the monied interest, great weight and influence in the state; the study of every branch of the public revenues, and of the public funds which are the grand bulwark of the power and influence of the monied men, becomes a necessary part of education, and should have had its rise with the origin of these funds; but though they have annually increased, with astonishing rapidity, from the Revolution to the present time, yet the generality of young men, whose situation in life may afford them reasonable expectations of being chosen directors of those funds, representatives of the people in parliament, or servants of the crown in the revenue department, are often quite uninformed, and unskilled in matters of this nature; and it is maintained by some writers of great eminence, “that successive parliaments have been held since that memorable æra, in which very few of the members have had any tolerable idea of public credit, as it stands supported, or becomes endangered by the increase of the national debt.”

The same method is pursued with respect to this subject as the two former: the origin of the public revenues of nations is traced; the various resources of the most ancient empires are pointed out; their methods of amassing treasures, or of raising

raising money as a provision for war, and other extraordinary demands on the state are made known; and the principles on which all their revenue transactions were founded, are carefully preserved. The records of modern times furnishing new elements of finance principles, these are duly noticed; and every source of revenue, which has been found practicable and productive, is laid open. Lastly, the whole fabric of public credit, on which the NATIONAL DEBT of this kingdom is founded, is critically examined, and traced to its origin; and the principles on which it now flourishes, (to the equal astonishment and admiration of the whole world,) with the means of preventing its decline, are clearly stated; so that the student may be enabled to decide with precision, on every plan that shall be proposed for improving the public revenues, or for diminishing or augmenting this immense debt, as the exigencies of state may require.

Having thus given the outlines of his plan, and pointed out the necessity, utility, and advantages of acquiring a competent knowledge of Commerce, Politics, and Finances, the author has only to add, that he hopes the execution will be found equal to the design; and that he may be permitted to plead the merit of having fixed the attention of his countrymen  
to

to studies of the utmost consequence to the welfare of Great Britain, and facilitated the means of pursuing them, by a diligent, faithful extraction of the essence of every work of reputation that could afford him the least assistance in completing his own: which, he flatters himself, may be substituted in the place of many of them, and be considered as a compendium of desirable knowledge and profitable instruction.

The distinct treatises on the three subjects, COMMERCE, POLITICS, and FINANCES, formerly published in a quarto volume, were received with general approbation: but a cheaper edition, and a new form of compiling it, having been suggested by some respectable gentlemen of the University of Oxford, to whom the author paid a visit in the year 1798, as likely to be more useful to young students; the plan recommended by them has been carried into execution; and their opinion “ that young gentlemen, who  
“ are too apt to be remiss in their attendance  
“ at the public lectures of their learned Pro-  
“ fessors, might be induced to receive informa-  
“ tion and instruction in the present form,  
“ from private lectures comprized in a moderate  
“ volume; and divided into such portions,  
“ as neither to overload, nor fatigue the  
“ mind,

“ mind, and which may be taken up, and laid  
“ aside, at pleasure, for other studies or ne-  
“ cessary relaxation,” has been correctly  
adopted.



# ELEMENTS OF COMMERCE.

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## LECTURE I.

COMMERCE, in the general sense of the word, means no more than a reciprocal communication, intercourse, or correspondence between man and man ; but as a term of art, it constantly includes the idea of exchange, and serves to distinguish the mercantile negotiations carried on by the inhabitants of different nations with each other, from the operations of inland *traffick*, commonly known under the name of trade, wholesale and retail, and limited to one particular country or town. Yet, like many other abuses which familiar conversation has licensed, the two terms are sometimes used indiscriminately ; and therefore, having noticed the proper distinctions, we may occasionally follow the example, when treating generally of any branch of commerce carried on from Great Britain to any particular country, such as the West India trade, the African trade, &c.

Our first inquiry will naturally be directed to the origin of internal traffick between man and man, inhabitants of the same country, which, as it gave birth to the first idea of it, may properly be stiled the parent of foreign commerce.

*Civil liberty* and *traffick*, being both of them derived from human necessities, are therefore reputed to have had one origin, and to have grown up together. From the earliest accounts we have of mankind, a distinction of characters has been as evidently traced, as the difference in the persons and bodily constitutions of the human species: as some men were ever found to be more robust and active than others, so were some minds disposed to ingenuity and industry, whilst others discovered a propensity to indolence and idleness, the parents of mischief. Hence arose the necessity of associating, and of framing and submitting to the laws of civil society, under some mode of government, for the protection of life and liberty, and to ascertain, limit, and secure private property. Till this was done, as there was no fixed property, neither was there any traffick; for, whatever the robust and active, the ingenious and industrious had acquired, (over and above what was necessary for the demands of nature,) the weak and imbecile obtained through pity and compassion, the indolent and inactive extorted by fraud and deceit, or the vicious seized by force.

But

But no sooner was property limited, and personal liberty secured from savage violence by civil institutes, than the ingenious and industrious began a reciprocal traffick. The husbandman, who employed himself in cultivating the land, had neither time nor capacity to invent or improve the instruments necessary for his use; nor had the artist, who supplied him with them, either skill or leisure to sow the seed, or to plant the vegetable that was to produce food for his subsistence. A traffick between these therefore, naturally arose; the ploughshare was exchanged for corn; and one art was improved by another, in proportion as one artist assisted the other. Their mutual wants brought them together, produced a traffick between them, and established the practice of *barter* or *exchange*, which furnished the first idea of *universal commerce*, and still continues to be its first principle. In process of time, whole societies of men finding that the spot of earth they inhabited produced through their industry and labour a superfluity of the necessaries of life, and perceiving that there were many things wanting, not merely for the continuance of their existence, but to provide for their well-being, resolved on endeavouring to procure these, by exchanging their own superfluous commodities for those which they imagined they wanted, and which they either conceived, or actually knew to be the produce of other countries. These ideas and perceptions

gave birth to *navigation*, whereby the reciprocal wants of different societies were supplied; and as people increased, so did commerce, which caused many to quit husbandry for manufactures and other ways of living; for convenience whereof they formed themselves into communities; and this was the origin of all towns; which, for the more easy communication with neighbouring countries, were generally built on the banks of navigable rivers, or on the coasts of the sea.

Having thus marked the origin of commercial ideas, let us, for a moment, suspend our inquiries, to make one important, awful reflection, which seems to break in upon the mind, as a ray of celestial intelligence, and thus inform it. “Here, O Man! thou hast an evident demonstration of the existence of a  
“supreme Creator and Disposer of all things;  
“for who, but the Almighty, could instil the  
“idea into the minds of the first society of  
“men who entertained it, that there were  
“other immense tracts of land to explore,  
“from which they were separated by an abyss  
“of waters? Or, admitting their first intercourse to have been only with other societies of men on the same continent, who but  
“the Deity could bring them together, or  
“inspire them with different degrees of knowledge, skill, and industry, so that some should  
“cultivate the vine, others, different grains;  
“that some should seek to defend their bodies  
“from

“ from the inclemency of the weather by the  
“ skins of animals ; that others should fabricate  
“ their woolly fleeces ; and others again work  
“ up the fibres of trees and plants for the same  
“ purposes ? In fine, where the intercourse be-  
“ tween the inhabitants of an extensive conti-  
“ nent was not sufficient to consume the pro-  
“ ducts of nature and industry, but there still  
“ remained a surplus of various articles, what,  
“ but the Supreme Intelligence, could convey to  
“ man the notion of rendering arts, manufac-  
“ tures, and barter or exchange, universal,  
“ throughout the habitable globe ? ”

We are now to inquire, who were the first people that carried the two principles of commerce, *BARTER* and *NAVIGATION*, into general practice. History informs us, that we stand indebted to the Egyptians and Phœnicians for the first rudiments of navigation. The Egyptians were a warlike people, and governed by kings, who were all of them either heroes or legislators, whose ambition was to raise their monarchy to the highest degree of perfection ; and to attain this end, they encouraged navigation, and extended their commerce by conquests. They were a luxurious people, and became extremely fond of foreign novelties ; but even in the gratification of these propensities, they ever had an eye to the national prosperity, and made their very passions subservient to their commercial transactions. Thus, while ambition

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prompted them to subdue kingdoms, the chief use they made of their conquests was to convert the inhabitants into slaves, whom they employed in all laborious works, that they might indulge themselves in a state of luxury. This is the account which their own and other historians give of them.

The principal commerce of the Egyptians was that of the east. As Egypt was intersected by an infinite number of canals the communication between their great cities was rendered short and easy; and they derived great advantage from the situation of their cities, all of them standing nearly on a level, by which the transit of merchandize by the ports for exportation, and of foreign commodities from the ports to the inland provinces was greatly facilitated, and rendered more secure and reasonable, than if they had been obliged to make use of land carriage; which, in those days, was likewise attended with so much delay, that great losses were sustained on perishable commodities, in long journies from sea ports to inland towns, in countries which wanted the convenience of water carriage.

The monuments of the grandeur, riches, and luxury of Egypt, arising from their commerce, are so easily to be traced in the works of historians and travellers, that I need only recommend a perusal of them, for further satisfaction on the subject; but the commercial  
knowledge



knowledge we derive from the Egyptians must be ranked amongst our Elements of Commerce. It consists of two objects :

1. The employment of slaves procured from other countries by conquest, or by purchase, as articles of commerce.

2. Making navigable canals in countries where it is practicable. The Chinese, the Dutch, and the Flemings have carried this principle into practice more extensively than any other people ; and of late years, it has been successfully adopted in England.

The rapid progress of the Phœnicians, who formed a considerable maritime power, and undertook very long and dangerous voyages to improve their commerce, is still more remarkable than that of the Egyptians ; for they possessed only a narrow slip of land on the coast of Asia ; a situation in which they were blocked up, in a great measure, by powerful neighbours on every side. Their first attention, under these circumstances, was to make as many fortified ports, harbours, and creeks as possible. This accomplished, they applied themselves so indefatigably to every study bearing the least relation to maritime or commercial affairs, that they acquired the reputation of being the inventors of *Arithmetic* and *Astronomy* ; and of being the first people who reduced the commercial art to a fixed regular system. It is asserted that they trafficked for tin, on our coasts of Cornwall.



From the Phœnicians we derive two more principles of commerce :

1. It must be supported by maritime power.
2. It will always thrive better in free governments, either limited monarchies, or republics, than in despotic monarchies ; therefore the Phœnicians made a more rapid progress than the Egyptians ; for their government was republican, and their cities and ports were free and open, by which means *Tyre* and *Sidon* rose to a state of unrivalled opulence.

The Ethiopians, Persians, and Arabs, about the same early period, were likewise concerned in commerce ; but their small consequence deserves no further notice, except curiosity should prompt the industrious student to further researches respecting them, which he may make in HURT'S History of the Navigation and Commerce of the Ancients.

After the destruction of *Tyre* by Alexander the Great, *Carthage* became the chief seat of commerce, which was carried on with such astonishing success, that towards the end of the second Punic war, that famous city reckoned within her walls no less than 700,000 inhabitants : above 300 cities of Africa were dependant on this republic ; and they had planted colonies in Spain, Sicily, and Sardinia. Some assert that her navies penetrated as far as America : but this is uncertain. Here, however, we trace another commercial principle :

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The establishment of colonies for the improvement and extension of commerce.

The utility of navigation was too striking long to escape the notice of the Greeks ; a people so industrious, and who knew so well how to appropriate the inventions of others, could not fail of aiming at the dominion of the sea. Accordingly, in the age preceding the birth of Alexander, Athens and Sparta were engaged against each other, combating for the empire of the Egean and Ionian Seas. Philip king of Macedon, availing himself of this contest, which reduced both parties, and distinguishing clearly the commercial views of the rival republics, used his utmost efforts, from the commencement of his reign, to establish a powerful maritime force. Under pretence of clearing those seas of pirates, who had long infested them, he sent out a strong naval armament ; but, in a short time, allured by lucrative motives unworthy of a great prince, he became himself a much greater pirate than any of those whom he had driven away.

Alexander the Great, his son and successor, carried his designs by sea much further ; for he built the city of Alexandria to rival Carthage, and opened the trade, through this channel, between the Indian and Mediterranean Seas.

The commerce of the East, or of the East Indies appears to have been the chief object of all the voyages undertaken by the ancients ; Arrian, Pliny, Solinus, Philostratus, and our countrymen

countrymen Robertfon and Vincent, all plainly prove that India was known, and occasionally reforted to; but the communication between that country and Europe was not accomplished till the reign of Alexander.

After the demolition of Carthage, and the ruin of all Greece by the Romans, they became masters of all Africa, and a great part of Asia; fo that every thing gave way to the Roman power; and the city of Rome became the fole miftrefs of the profitable trade to the Eaft Indies; which proved the fource of immense riches, and introduced that refined luxury and elegance, which rendered the Roman republic the ftandard of tafte, and enabled her, in the end, to carry her improvements in arts and fciences, to fuch a degree of perfection, that all her works of art at this period of their flourishing ftate, which were handed down to their immediate pofterity, or have been preferved to our time, are confidered as mafter-pieces in their feveral kinds.

We have only one melancholy remark to make on the well known hiftory of the power, wealth, and elegance of ancient Rome :

That Luxury, when it is carried to fuch a pitch as to introduce a general depravity of manners, corruption of morals, and debility both of body and mind, becomes the bane of commerce, and muft fooner or later prove the deftruction of every country, whofe welfare depends

depends on trade and navigation. Valerius, Paterculus, and Tacitus may be consulted to verify this observation; and it is recommended to the young student to investigate it, in the history of the late astonishing revolution of France.

We derive from the Romans only one principle of commerce, which modern nations have adopted and considerably improved:

The *Insurance* or *Affurance* of ships and merchandize from losses at sea. This is traced back to the time of the Emperor Claudius.

The Goths and Vandals completed what effeminacy had partly accomplished, the ruin of the Roman empire; and then, the commerce carried on between the Indian and the Mediterranean Seas was thrown into another channel; for it ceased through the Red Sea by way of Alexandria, and was now conducted by Trebezon, Damascus, and Aleppo, which gave rise to the trade carried on by the free states of Italy, such as Venice, Genoa, and Pisa; and the merchandise of the East Indies was conveyed by this new channel, not only to all the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, but to England, to the Netherlands, to Germany, and even to the Baltic.

The situation of *Bruges* in the Austrian Netherlands, rendered it about this period, and for a considerable time after, the emporium of all Europe. The commodities of the Northern countries,

countries, such as corn, naval stores, &c. were brought thither in the summer season, and deposited to be *bartered* for the Asiatic commodities which arrived from the Levant. Thus the circulation of the delicacies and luxuries of the Eastern world became extensive throughout the northern regions of Europe, in return for naval stores, and such other articles as were necessary for India Voyages.

Bruges underwent the same fate as Tyre, Carthage, and Rome, with respect to the effects of opulence and luxury. The riches they acquired made the inhabitants idle, inattentive and negligent; they failed in the execution of their orders, left their correspondents letters unanswered, became candidates for titles and posts of honour under the Spanish monarchy, and at length despised that commerce which had been the chief source of their opulence.

*Antwerp*, another city of the Netherlands, was the next place which became famous for its extensive commerce, founded on the decline of Bruges; and its inhabitants were industrious, frugal, and sober, so that a permanent state of prosperity might have been expected, if Philip II. king of Spain, a tyrannical bigot, had not authorized the duke *D'Alva*, his governor of the Netherlands, to propagate the Roman Catholic religion with fire and sword, and to introduce the bloody tribunal of the inquisition.

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The close connexion between civil liberty and commerce, which we have already noticed as essential to the prosperity of the latter, being destroyed at Antwerp, the artists, manufacturers, and merchants, who were of the reformed, or Protestant religion, and even several Roman Catholics, who dreaded the inquisition and its tortures, fled from this persecution to Amsterdam, and other cities of the United Provinces of Holland, which had just shook off the Spanish yoke. Others came over to England; and this memorable event may be said not only to have laid the foundation of the subsequent flourishing state of the Dutch republic, but of the maritime power, extensive commerce, and opulence of England, soon after this period.

England was fortunate at this era in having her sceptre swayed by a princess of uncommon talents, zealous for the welfare of Europe, and a powerful supporter of the protestant refugees; and she had the happiness to be assisted by a succession of ministers and counsellors of consummate abilities, and immaculate integrity. No wonder then, that this was the favourable crisis for extending and improving the commerce of England and Holland, or that Amsterdam and London should rise on the ruins of Bruges and Antwerp, to renowned commercial cities; the former, having lost its trade through indolence, and the latter, having been depopulated by persecution.

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We have to note two principles of commerce, collected from the fate of Bruges and Antwerp:

1. Indefatigable industry and attention are requisite for carrying on inland trade and foreign commerce successfully. By indolence and negligence, the inhabitants of Bruges lost both: for trade will not remain long in any place where it is received with coolness and indifference.

2. Toleration in matters of religious faith is equally necessary for the prosperity of commerce.

Our next business will be to observe the happy effects of adopting the leading principles of the ancients, during the long and glorious reign of Elizabeth, and of introducing new systems unknown to them; thereby facilitating and accelerating the commercial prosperity of succeeding generations, down to our own time.



## LECTURE II.

**T**HE commercial revolution which was the principal subject of our last lecture, encouraged our countrymen, in the true spirit of emulation, to form the basis of a maritime and commercial power, that should take in every branch of traffick known, or carried on by the inhabitants of other countries.

The navigation and trade of England was trifling before this epoch, and had continued nearly in the same situation, with little improvement, from the time of William the conqueror, except in one instance, which shall be noticed in its proper place.

The foreign commerce was limited to exportations of the natural products of the country, unmanufactured; such as tin, lead, wool, hides, iron, and fish, which were usually bartered for foreign manufactured commodities, particularly for fine woollen cloths, wrought silks, gold and silver brocades and embroideries, and cloths of gold, as they were then called. But the inland trade received a very considerable increase as early as the reign of Edward III., which in pro-  
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cess of time produced a capital branch of beneficial exportation. Before his time, the manufacturing of wool into cloths was chiefly confined to the then Spanish Netherlands, since known by the denominations of Austrian, French, and Dutch Flanders; and the kings of England receiving subsidies from their subjects for the maintenance of their civil government and regal state in wool, were obliged to export it on their own account, in order to realize an annual revenue, and for this purpose they had their brokers or factors at Bruges, Ghent, Brussels, Louvain, and other cities of Flanders; and the Flemings took off such a quantity of English wool, and paid so high a price for it, that the breeding of sheep, for the profit of their wool, was a principal source of income for all persons of property who understood the nature of this traffick; but fortunately for this country, at the parliament assembled at Westminster A. D. 1338, the 11th of Edward III. the exportation of wool was prohibited, a new revenue was provided for the king; and in order to invite and encourage cloth-workers, and other manufacturers of wool, to come over and settle in England, very great privileges were granted, and pensions were allowed them from the crown till they should be so well established as to be able to gain a comfortable livelihood by their ingenuity and industry. At the same time, a prohibition was laid on the importation of foreign cloths, and the

the king's subjects were forbid to wear them, yet, neither this prohibition, nor a sumptuary law made in the twenty-seventh year of his reign, limiting and restricting the luxury of dress, particularly in woollen cloths, could prevent a partial importation of foreign fine cloths; for the act of parliament of 1338 went no farther than to prohibit the exportation of wool, for the encouragement of the manufactory at home; whereas, the other prohibitions rested solely on the strength of the king's proclamation, which was not duly obeyed; for it appears by a record preserved in the Exchequer, that 1831 pieces of fine cloths were imported at 6 l. sterling per piece, in the 28th year of his reign.

In the reign of Henry VII. the importation of wrought silks, and of stuffs fabricated with silk and thread mixed, was prohibited by act of parliament.

Edward III. then, and Henry VII. were the only sovereigns in whose reigns any considerable attention was given to commercial affairs, and their regulations produced only the limited advantage of establishing some manufacturers in this country, who did not produce, for a considerable time, a sufficiency for home consumption; neither could the woollen manufacture ever have been made to answer the purposes of universal commerce, if such a singular and important event, as that which happened in the  
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reign of Elizabeth had not been the immediate cause of increasing and bringing to perfection this staple commodity: for Edward gained by his liberality only about seventy families from the Walloon country in the neighbourhood of Mecklin; whereas the Walloon cloth-workers, who fled from D'Alva's persecution, came over in large bodies, consisting of a sufficient number of skilful hands, to extend the fabrication to such a degree by their own industry, and the instruction of a rising generation of workmen in this branch, as to render it an article of the first consequence to the nation, in its commerce with other countries.

The state of the silk manufactory in England, till a much later date, was nearly the same as that of the woollen before the accession of Elizabeth; for so slow was the progress, and so trifling the improvements, that foreign-wrought silks were allowed to be imported under certain restrictions, notwithstanding the prohibitory act of Henry VII. nor was it till the impolitic revocation of the edict of Nantz (granting a free toleration to the Hugonots or French protestants) by Louis XIV. that this manufacture began to be so well established in England, as not only to become a very considerable article of domestic trade, but even of exportation. It is computed that France lost, by this despotic edict of a bigoted monarch, 800,000 of its most  
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industrious inhabitants, and that they brought away, to the value of five millions sterling in specie, jewels, and other effects. Great numbers of these protestant refugees, thoroughly skilled in the manufacture of silks, gold and silver stuffs, and embroideries on silk and on linen, settled at Canterbury and others at London, where their descendants remain to this day.

The adoption of some of the commercial principles derived from the ancients was the next important measure of the able ministers of Elizabeth, which produced wonderful effects towards extending the commerce and augmenting the maritime power of the kingdom.

Carthage established colonies; so did England. In the reign of Elizabeth, Sir Walter Raleigh discovered and partly settled a colony at Virginia in America, which he distinguished by that name, in honour of his virgin Queen. Several other settlements in the sugar and tobacco islands were planned at this period, and completely accomplished by her successor James I.

The establishment of a maritime force for the protection of foreign commerce was deemed by the ancients, one of the grand principles of commercial policy. Elizabeth adopted this maxim, and kept on float so formidable a navy, that it answered the two valuable purposes of subduing her enemies, and of protecting the

commerce of her subjects. Her fleets were generally victorious; and at length became so powerful that her brave admirals Drake and Cavendish attacked the fleets of Philip II. and burnt the city of Cadiz, in return for his attempt to invade England with his pretended *Invincible Armada*; and on the accession of his successor Philip III. the English defeated the first Spanish fleet he sent to sea.

It was at this era, likewise, that the English navy gained that superiority on the ocean which it has ever since preserved; on the support of which, not only our commercial interests but our national independence ultimately rests; for the British isles, not admitting of universal fortifications, without this safe-guard, not improperly styled “the wooden walls of old England,” we might be the victims of combined enemies on the continent, capable of bringing into the field, superior land forces.

The successes of Elizabeth at sea, says *De Foe* in his *Plan of English Commerce*, “made seamen; “ her success in trade made merchants: to say “ the truth, her subjects were fired with new “ thoughts; and some of her principal nobility “ and gentry commenced merchant-adventurers; “ and engaged in mercantile associations, which “ laid the foundation of public trading companies; some commanded ships; some planted “ colonies; some supplied stock; some ventured “ their



“ their lives ; some their estates ; but almost  
 “ all, in general, contributed something. From  
 “ the war with Spain the seamen returned  
 “ enriched with the plunder of whole fleets,  
 “ and not only benefited themselves, but the  
 “ whole nation. This made people run to sea,  
 “ as country folks do to a fair ; and the multitude  
 “ of ships and seamen grew so great in Eng-  
 “ land, that her fleets were said to cover the  
 “ seas, and the queen reigned as it were mistress  
 “ of the ocean.” Nor was she ever reduced to  
 the cruel necessity of *pressing*, for her people  
 were so animated by the example of their sove-  
 reign, and the good fortune of their fellow-  
 subjects, that seamen crowded into the service ;  
 and whatever adventure was on foot by sea,  
 public or private, the projectors were sure not  
 to want hands.

TREATIES OF COMMERCE with different na-  
 tions form a part of its principles, and were not  
 unknown to the ancients, but they have been  
 more frequent, and better regulated in modern  
 times : they are essentially necessary ; for with-  
 out them foreign traffick cannot be carried on  
 with safety.

Elizabeth, accordingly, effected treaties of  
 amity and commerce with several considerable  
 foreign powers ; in virtue of which treaties she  
 established factories in their dominions, and  
 increased the commercial correspondence and



connexions of her subjects, after the discoveries made by them in America, in every quarter of the world.

Her first embassy on this account was to the tzar, or grand duke of Muscovy, from whom she obtained stipulations for allowing a limited number of English merchants to transport their commodities through his extensive dominions to Persia, where they carried woollen cloths and stuffs of various kinds. The merchants carrying on this traffick formed afterwards a new plan of commerce with Muscovy, importing from that country into England, iron, hemp, and linen; and thus laid the foundation of the Russia Company at London.

In the next place, she concluded a treaty of peace and commerce with Solyman the Magnificent, emperor of the Turks. The English merchants, on the strength of this treaty, fitted out ships laden with English commodities, the woollen manufactures in particular, for several parts of Turkey, and established factories at Constantinople, Aleppo, and Smyrna, and this gave birth to the Turkey Company.

The trade carried on with the gold coasts of Africa, also, commenced in this reign, and in the progress of it, the merchants concerned in it were incorporated and called The African Company.

Finally,

Finally, the most interesting, and, at this day, the most flourishing commercial society in the whole world, the British East India Company, owes its origin to this ever memorable era; for on the 30th day of December 1600, Queen Elizabeth granted the first charter to George Earl of Cumberland, and two hundred and fifteen knights, aldermen, and merchants, incorporating them into one body politic and corporate, by the name of *The Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading to the East Indies*. It will astonish the present generation to find that the first subscription of all the members of this great company amounted only to 72,000*l*. and that even this small capital, which was applied to building of ships, and other necessary services, was not made a general fund, but each member contributed according to his circumstances or inclination for adventures. However, in 1613 they established a joint capital stock; and this company subsisted under various forms and regulations till the year 1708, when it was incorporated with the present establishment under the title of *The honorable the united company of merchants of England trading to the East Indies*.

Here then, we have a new principle of commerce, unknown to the antients; viz. the incorporating of societies of merchants, for carrying on any distinct branch of commerce,

requiring a large capital; but as several objections to it have been urged by commercial writers of repute, and at different times in parliamentary debates; this principle must be resumed and discussed hereafter under a separate head.

It is remarkable that this good queen died on the 24th of March 1603, and that the East India fleet did not return from its first successful voyage till the month of September in the same year, so that she did not live to see the happy result of her generous concern for the prosperity of her subjects, demonstrated amongst other instances, in her patronage of this great national enterprize. I shall now proceed to arrange, connect, and apply the general elements of commerce hitherto introduced, to the present state of our inland trade and foreign commerce, and shall demonstrate in what degree these and some other principles I shall have occasion to introduce of modern date, have contributed to bring both to a state of perfection they never could have attained in remote ages.

## LECTURE III.

HAVING traced historically, the progress of universal commerce, till we have happily settled it on a firm and broad basis in our own country; the order of our subject now requires that we should deduce the origin, mark the progress, and point out the present state of those *arts* and *manufactures*, which, after having supplied our mutual wants at home, have furnished us with such excesses, or surplusses, as have enabled us to send out considerable quantities to foreign markets; thereby continually increasing our foreign commerce, and the relative strength and riches of the nation.

The *capital* or *stock* in trade, with which any nation sets up a foreign commerce, must consist of the produce of the soil and the labour of the people.

The produce of the soil forms the natural riches of a nation. The labour of the people, its acquired, or relative wealth. Agriculture, in all its branches, or the art of improving land, so as to render it as fertile as possible, is the parent of all other arts, and the source of the natural riches of any nation. The *useful* arts  
and

and *manufactures* are the means of augmenting the acquired riches of a state, by the most profitable exertions of the labour of the people.

The *liberal* and *polite arts* enlighten and embellish society ; and sometimes are carried to such perfection, that they likewise contribute to the relative riches of nations ; but this does not generally, nor frequently happen in any great degree, it is therefore necessary to draw a line of distinction between them and the *useful*, which in general are the *mechanic arts*.

To begin at the fountain head.

#### ON AGRICULTURE.

Husbandry being the only sure dependence of any nation for its subsistence, it ought to be the policy of every wise legislature, not only to give encouragement to this first original art, but to pursue it in such a manner, that the safety of the community may not be endangered by the loss of any thing else. A dependence on commerce at large never was, nor ever can be, in any degree comparable to that upon cultivation ; being, by far, more fluctuating, more open to rivalry of neighbours, and even liable to almost total destruction ; whereas the very contrary is the case with agriculture ; and the trade that issues from it is of all others the most certain, for the sale of absolute necessities must always be more sure than that of superfluities.

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Wherever great numbers of people have existed together in society, we may take it for granted that *agriculture* has flourished; for it increases *population*, and the multiplication of the people augments the relative riches of a nation, in proportion to the quantity of labour. It is supposed that the spontaneous fruits of the earth, with very little cultivation, always produced a sufficient fund of nourishment for every society of men, in a state of nature, when the numbers of the consumers and their wants were equally scanty. But since commerce has become more general amongst the civilized nations of the earth, the soil of most countries, by the joint exertions of skill and labour, has been made to produce more than sufficient for the consumption of its inhabitants: the soil of Great Britain, in particular, yields a redundancy of native products, for the purposes of universal commerce. Just the same effect is produced by the ingenuity and industry of *artists* and *manufacturers*; their labours, after supplying our real and imaginary wants at home, are sent abroad; and the care and risk of transporting these various productions of nature and art to foreign climes, centers with the merchant, who is actuated to exert his commercial good offices by a principle of gain, on the balance of his transactions with different countries; and this is also his reward for the general utility of his profession to society. But the merchant, generally residing in capitals  
or



or large sea port towns, must have his intermediate agents or factors in the different counties of the kingdom. These are mostly country-dealers and shopkeepers, who have cut short the ancient principle of *barter*, by the introduction of another agent called *money*, which has also enlarged the first principle of barter, and constituted a general inland trade, which we term buying and selling. The dealers or shopkeepers purchase with money, the superfluous grain the farmer has produced beyond what he could either consume or dispose of by simple barter. The same is done with respect to the labours of *artists* and *manufacturers*; and thus a chain of connexion is established and kept up between the husbandman, the artist, manufacturer, shopkeeper, dealer, factor, and merchant; but the merchant cannot perform his extensive operations abroad, without the assistance of another set of men, whom we shall distinguish by the general denomination of mariners or seamen. Nor is this sufficient; for after having laden his ships with the natural produce or the manufactures of his country, he must receive additional support from the state, in times of war. A naval force must be kept on foot to escort and protect his merchandise to the destined port, and to secure it from all attempts of the enemy.

Thus the several classes of men just described put the busy world in motion, and encourage  
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the industry of nations, by circulating the natural wealth of the world, in order to acquire to themselves another species of wealth denominated riches; by the accumulation of money, or funds constituting what we call personal estate, to distinguish it from landed property. But as every thing relative to this species of riches falls more properly under the department of the finances, it is sufficient to have noticed it in this place, as the final result of successful commercial transactions.

But to return to the important subject of agriculture; no proposition can be clearer than that any neglect or mismanagement, in a nation, of this parent of all other arts, must derange, if not totally destroy the regular connexion we have just described. And much it is to be feared, that such neglect and mismanagement is now producing the most alarming effects throughout the kingdom.

In the first place, the production of a surplus of corn, so as to render it an article of exportation, has ceased now, nearly half a century; and though it is acknowledged that our exports of this natural product of our soil was more profitable to the nation than the exportation of any of our manufactures, no measures have been taken to restore such a valuable branch of commerce. On the contrary, since the great scarcity of wheat in 1795, and the still greater scarcity of the two last years, we

7 have

have been under the necessity to pay nearly as much for the importation of foreign corn, as was formerly received by this country annually for exporting it to other nations. Yet bread has risen to more than double the price at which it was sold to the public, at the periods when the largest quantities were exported. It is likewise well attested that, within these two years, the annual produce at home, has experienced a deficiency of three months in each year; so that, if corn had not been brought from abroad, the whole nation must have been put upon a short allowance of bread, by a daily diminution of one fourth of the usual quantity. This plainly shews that too little attention has been paid to agriculture, which, in some cases, has yielded the vast increase of 10,500 per cent.

It is therefore of the first consequence, that every well wisher to his country, and every friend to humanity, should endeavour to find out the real causes of such a calamitous alteration in our political economy. And as it is difficult to advance a single step in this important investigation without being involved in serious controversy, we shall only state such principles and facts as may guide the student in his researches, leaving the result to his own decision.

It is universally acknowledged that the principal and most essential cause of the prosperity of a state is, the ingenuity and labour of its inhabitants  
exercised

exercised upon the fertility of its soil. It follows of course, that all the land of a country should be cultivated ; yet it is well authenticated, that the uncultivated lands of Great Britain amount to *twenty two-millions of acres*, or more than one fourth part of the whole territory.

It is likewise generally admitted, that our lands under cultivation are capable of considerable improvement, and it has been calculated that such practical improvements as they would admit of, would require many thousands of new cultivators, in order to bring them to the highest degree of fertility ; and taking both the waste lands, and those which may be further improved into the account, the proper cultivation of the whole, would probably give employment to 200,000 new families, and subsistence to twice that number. Now there are two kinds of agriculture, the one founded on true, the other on false principles.

The grand question therefore is—Does the agriculture of England proceed at present on the former, or on the latter of these principles ?

If on the latter, it must, if not remedied, undermine our manufactures, our inland trade, and some beneficial branches of our foreign commerce.

The celebrated Montesquieu justly observes, that lands laid down for pasture will always be  
thinly

thinly peopled, because of the few hands required to manage them ; whereas corn-lands employ much greater numbers to cultivate them.

A farm that requires ten horses and four servants to till it for corn, if the grounds are thrown into grass, may be managed by one servant and two horses.

Agriculture and population are so combined, so dependent on each other, that it is hardly possible to disunite them ; when the first is conducted on false principles, the latter suffers of course. Mankind will multiply in every country, where plenty supports the children, without depriving the parents of a comfortable subsistence. In a village where you see none but pasture lands adjoining, you will find a very scanty portion of inhabitants, ragged and poor, barely existing on the milk of their cows, and the vegetables in their gardens. Turn to another where you see the hearty peasants loading home the corn-harvest, and you will observe them decently clothed, followed to and from the field by a train of healthy children, and every thing around them bespeaking peace, plenty, and rural felicity.

That by far too large a proportion of land is allotted to pasturage in England cannot be denied, since it has been fully proved, that more than one half of the produce of all our lands is now consumed by horses alone ; and a selfish

selfish interest encourages an increasing breed of these animals; for a horse at three years old may be worth twenty guineas, whereas the best ox at the same age will scarcely sell for more than ten.

It becomes a question then, whether true political economy does not require the exportation, or other means of getting rid of 500,000 horses \* kept for parade or pleasure, independent of those which are usefully employed, and which consume 3,250,000 quarters of oats annually? And whether the quick conveyance of letters and passengers by mail coaches, is a national equivalent to the loss sustained by cultivating so much land to feed them, and likewise sending so much money abroad annually, for oats to supply the deficiency of that grain at home?.

The next enquiry that calls for the strictest scrutiny, is the rage for enclosures, which has pervaded the kingdom now upwards of thirty years, with the sanction of the legislature, accorded to the great proprietors of landed estates. The discussion of this vast national subject has opened a wide field for speculation on the one hand, and for controversy on the other: the better to determine whether this measure has produced public benefit; or has only operated to the advantage of individuals, it may be necessary to ask this question:

\* Lord Darnley's speech in the House of Lords, Nov. 28, 1800.



Have the numerous enclosures answered the general purposes for which they were granted by the legislature? By referring to the parliamentary debates at the time, when bills for enclosures were first brought into the house of commons to any considerable number, it will be found, that the promoters of them generally asserted, that they would be the means of reviving that most profitable branch of commerce, the exportation of wheat; and that bread would be reduced to that moderate price, at which the poor husbandman, the artizan, manufacturer, and other industrious classes of the lower orders of the people might afford to purchase an abundant supply for themselves and families?

The present dreadful scarcity, the necessity of importing large quantities of foreign wheat weekly, and the exorbitant price of bread as well as of butcher's meat, butter, eggs, and poultry, without the smallest probability of any considerable diminution in any one article, all the other necessaries of life even to vegetables, after a season the most favourable for producing abundance, being regulated by the owners according to the price of bread, we imagine will be sufficient proofs to convince every disinterested person that the foregoing question must be resolved in the negative.

I shall therefore make no scruple to affirm, that enclosure bills, not having a clause to restrict the proprietors to tillage in a certain  
due

due proportion, have been profitable to individuals, but detrimental in a very high degree to the community.

Need we add, how strangely the tables are turned upon our unfortunate, because misguided country, in this particular. Instead of paying a bounty to our own people for the exportation of corn, and receiving vast sums annually from foreign nations for the natural product of our soil, we now actually pay a bounty to different foreigners for their wheat, in the high price we are obliged to give for it ; and still, not being able to procure a sufficient supply, government has been compelled to offer a bounty, separately, and independent of the purchase money, for rice. But what must we think of the inattention or want of judgement of the administrators of public affairs, who have suffered a branch of commerce totally to fall off, perhaps never to revive, which a respectable author, who, in his "Essential Principles of the Wealth of Nations," just published, in opposition to the erroneous notions propagated in the fashionable work of Dr. Adam Smith on the same subject, informs his readers, "that it requires the labour  
" of six men to produce a profit of 32 l. to the  
" exporter of manufactures to a certain value,  
" whereas four men can produce a profit of  
" 51 l. by the exportation of corn of the same  
" value : the national profit, therefore, from the  
" exportation of the latter, exceeds that from



“ the exportation of the former, nearly in the  
 “ proportion of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 1.”

“ And if,” says the same intelligent writer,  
 “ a spirit of re-*ac*tion does not occupy the  
 “ country gentlemen, there is no knowing how  
 “ far the mischief may lead. The increase of  
 “ produce, and not the increase of the price  
 “ of produce, is what a wise agricultural na-  
 “ tion should chiefly aim at; and when this  
 “ becomes the principal object of the land own-  
 “ ers of Great Britain, the increase of their  
 “ incomes will then be a certain proof of the  
 “ flourishing state of the nation.”

The nation in general, being greatly inte-  
 rested that the rents of land should be raised  
 only in proportion to the increase of produce,  
 one of the chief obstructions to this increase  
 should be removed, which is the refusal to grant  
 leases; for the want of this security to the cul-  
 tivator in his farm, is the chief cause of his not  
 improving the land, to its highest possible degree  
 of fertility.

It is a melancholy reflection, that we have  
 been obliged to abandon one of the best prin-  
 ciples of commerce for the encouragement of  
 agriculture; and a principle originating in  
 the wisdom of parliament in the first year of  
 the reign of William and Mary, the memorable  
 era of the providential preservation of our reli-  
 gious and civil liberties, the glorious 1689.

It was then that a bounty was first granted on  
 the

the exportation of corn, which gave a new life and spirit to husbandry, and brought considerable wealth into England.

By means of this national encouragement, the farmer was animated to exert his best skill and labour, to procure an abundance of a commodity which he was sure to vend on advantageous terms, either for home consumption, or for exportation, and arable land was then more valuable than pasture.

Before this grand principle was happily introduced into our system of political economy, we had frequently been obliged to have recourse to foreign countries for the corn necessary for an annual subsistence from harvest to harvest. The bounty soon enabled us to be competitors, in this valuable branch of commerce, with the most fertile countries of Europe; and removed the ancient popular prejudices, which custom had rendered almost sacred, against storing corn in granaries.

The wisdom of the legislature at the same time put a check to the pernicious operations of avarice, by limiting this bounty to certain prices.

Thus, if wheat exceeded *forty-eight shillings* the quarter in our public markets, the bounty was suspended, because it had then got above the price at which the industrious artizan and manufacturer, and the lower classes of labouring workmen ought to be supplied with it; and

when bread rose from sixpence to nine-pence the quartern loaf, exportation was prohibited.

A real scarcity of wheat in England (owing to the very great demands from many parts of Europe, particularly from France and Italy, in which countries the harvest had fallen short of their usual produce in the years 1764, 1765, and 1766, followed unfortunately by bad seasons at home, brought the prudence of granting bounties into dispute; it was warmly contested in parliament, and numerous treatises were published on both sides of the question. The details of this controversy would be both tedious and useless. The result of the whole is, that the advantages to a commercial nation remain self-evident, the utmost that had been alleged against it, amounted to no more than to prove, that this benefit, like many others, had been abused, owing to the cupidity of merchants in exporting too large quantities, and of factors and farmers engaging in clandestine monopolies; by combining to purchase at low prices, and hoard up to such an extraordinary amount as to bring on an artificial scarcity, so as to raise the price till it gratifies their avaricious views.

To remedy this evil, government should have taken due care to ascertain the real quantity of corn in the kingdom; and should have been well assured, after the bounty had been suspended for any considerable time on account of a high

price, that there was an abundance for a long period in hand, before it was permitted again to take place.

The laws allowing the bounty, with proper alterations, still remain in force, but, unhappily, without the smallest probability of its revival.

I shall only add, that, from the year 1746 to 1750, *six* millions of quarters of wheat were exported, and the sums brought into the kingdom in return are computed at *eight millions* sterling, besides the commodities imported to make up the total value of the corn. We also find, that when the exports were the largest, wheat at home was at the lowest price.

Yet, in justice to those who object to the continuation of bounties and premiums, after the purpose for which they were first granted is effected; I must observe, that when any art or manufacture is so thoroughly established, by means of such encouragements given them in their infant state, as to become sufficiently profitable to the inventors, proprietors, or managers; continuing such bounties, or premiums, will be like keeping the leading strings on a child after it can go alone. And at different periods, when corn could be sent out of England at a lower price than it could be procured at foreign markets, the profits on exportation might have been sufficient without the bounty. At all events however, the cultivation of our lands ought to be improved, so as to produce

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plenty

plenty at home for consumption at a moderate price, and such a surplus, as will justify the legislature in repealing the existing laws against the exportation.

But another evil, we apprehend, is produced by enclosures and withholding of leases, which not only operates upon the price of provisions, in general, but is, to the full, as extensive, and more pernicious in its effects, inasmuch as an exorbitant price of the necessaries of life may be only temporary; whereas, the public injury, we are now to explore, is likely to be permanent, or, at best, will only admit of a remedy at a very distant period.

#### ON POPULATION.

An abundant population is the certain consequence of giving the greatest possible encouragement to agriculture; for the number of inhabitants will always be in proportion to the quantity of food produced by the culture of the earth. If therefore the lands of any country are not cultivated to the best advantage, depopulation must sooner or later take place.

If the lands are let at too high, or what are commonly called rack-rents, or sold too dear, it will be impossible for the farmers and tenants to pay those rents, and to maintain themselves and families comfortably.

Again,



Again, if they see no prospect of bettering their condition in life, they will not improve the lands so let to them, by any extraordinary efforts; they will bestow no more labour or expence upon them, than what is barely sufficient to make them produce the rack-rents for the landlord, and a scanty provision for their families; commerce must consequently suffer from this scanty labour, for little or no superfluity can be produced. Thus circumstanced, and besides heavily taxed by government, many families will emigrate to other countries, where they can better support themselves. We have already experienced partial emigrations from Ireland and England,] to America.

The increase of pasture land has diminished population in England. Extensive fields, that formerly gave employment to hundreds of those robust and useful people called *husbandmen*, and on which many poor cottagers dwelt, are now in the possession of some monopolizing grazier, and the flocks and herds are looked after by two or three solitary shepherds. This strange abuse in the management of our lands, joined to the engrossing of farms, destroying cottages, and depriving the poor of the benefit of commons, must infallibly bring on a declining state of population. Nor is this a new abuse, for it began so far back as the reign of Henry VIII.

For

“ For such,” says Lord Herbert in his Life of Henry VIII. “ was the covetousness of  
“ the richer sort at this time in England, that  
“ they converted many corn fields into pasture,  
“ hereof ensued a general decay, not only of  
“ houses, but of persons, which should do the  
“ king and country service. Besides, sheep,  
“ cattle, and clothes, being thus within the  
“ hands of a few, the price was much enhanced.  
“ To remedy this mischief, the king caused  
“ the antient statutes, provided on that behalf,  
“ to be looked into. And accordingly directed  
“ his commission to the justices of peace  
“ to restore all the tillage ground that had been  
“ inclosed any time within fifty years last past,  
“ and to cause the houses anciently upon them  
“ to be rebuilt.”

Great proprietors of lands, residing the greatest part of the year in London, and the remainder at some other place remote from their estates, is another discouragement to population ; it destroys old English hospitality ; prevents spending the incomes derived from their lands amongst their tenants, the shopkeepers of little towns, and the farmers in villages ; deprives the poor peasant of the charitable good offices of his proper patrons, and of occasional necessary indulgences ; and it is the chief cause of rack-rents, in order to increase the income in proportion to the extraordinary expence of residing in the capital.

The



The proprietor of lands and his tenants should have but one common interest \*.

The consequence of a decrease of population will be, first, the decline of its maritime power, for want of a proper number of seamen. Secondly, a decay of commerce, from the want of due protection on the seas. Thirdly, its manufactures will be made too dear for foreign markets, and inferior to their former quality, and inland trade must suffer in the same proportion; the first from want of hands to carry them on, and the last from a diminution of the number of people purchasing and consuming the articles they deal in. All these events must happen sooner or later, if there is a scarcity of hands in a commercial nation.

To remedy so great a public evil, whenever it happens, the following, amongst other measures, have been suggested, as being the least liable to opposition.

A distribution of the uncultivated crown lands, in small portions, subject to trifling *quit-rents*, and a general cultivation of all waste lands. Contributions from the nobility and other considerable land owners, towards erecting

\* The country gentleman, in former times, composed differences, and prevented law suits. His lady distributed domestic medicines, and prevented heavy apothecaries bills. Rent was delayed or not taken after bad seasons or illness.

small farms on such lands, and supplying young married peasants of good character with the implements of husbandry.

Lending small sums of money to poor husbandmen, artists, and manufacturers, on their personal security, to be returned after a certain time, either in specie, or in the produce of their industry. Laying a penalty, or some other restriction on the immoderate use of spirituous liquors.

Engaging gentlemen of rank and property, in every parish, to take upon themselves the administration of the poor rates, instead of tradesmen, who from interested views are biased to a partial, or an improvident distribution of the vast sums collected for the poor throughout the kingdom.

Building and endowing more work-houses and houses of industry, for the maintenance of the infirm and indigent poor, and to provide entirely for part of the children of the labouring poor; whenever the number exceeds four, the exceeding number to be taken from the parents, with their consent, to be considered and brought up as the children of the state, following in this instance, the noble example of the ancient Romans.

Providing dispensaries in every trading and manufacturing town throughout the kingdom, under a careful director, for the distribution of  
drugs

drugs and medicines at the price they are sold by the chemists in London, to prevent the lower classes of the people from falling into the hands of ignorant empirics, or being impoverished by hungry apothecaries.

But should these measures fail, and the evil increase, our last resource must be, a general naturalization in favour of poor foreign husbandmen, artists, and manufacturers, and a general introduction of mechanical machines, to preserve our manufactories from that total ruin, which a defective population must otherwise, inevitably bring on.

Before I take leave of this important subject, I shall point out the various demands of the state on the different classes of its inhabitants, as a guide to those, whose duty it is to inquire if our present population is sufficient to supply all those demands.

An abundance of hands must be found for the various branches of husbandry, and a proportional number of other hands to transport and distribute its products from place to place, for inland consumption.

The farmer, therefore, must not bring up all his sons to the plough and cart, nor all his daughters to the dairy: we must have a due quantity of retail shopkeepers in every country-town and village.

But

But if the people are numerous and industrious in the different branches of husbandry, and the soil is fertile in various kinds of products, there will be a superfluity for the purposes of being improved by art.

Our population must therefore afford us a sufficient number of artists and manufacturers.

The products of the country, either in their native state, or manufactured, which are destined for foreign consumption, must be sent out in ships, and this will require a due proportion of seamen.

To furnish these, every great manufacturing and sea-port town in the kingdom should have a college for the maintenance and education of boys for the sea service. The number should hold some proportion to the tonnage of their exports.

But a powerful maritime state cannot supply its mercantile inhabitants with seamen, if it means to keep up a respectable naval force, for the protection of commerce, and the defence of its dominions : that commerce must provide seamen for its own operations. Thus there must be a duplicate number of mariners, in order to abolish that cruel practice of pressing ; or, whenever the state is in danger from foreign enemies, government will be obliged to seize on the seamen employed in the merchants service, and commerce, for a time, will be stagnated.

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An abundant supply of seamen would be the result of the measure just recommended, and of another still more beneficial to the nation; I mean, the most liberal encouragement of fisheries on all the coasts of Great Britain, by which a hardy race of mariners might be trained up for the service of the navy, and the quantity of fish brought to our markets would reduce the price of meat. Various have been the attempts to accomplish this useful plan, but they have all failed hitherto, owing to different causes; and, amongst others, to the monopolizing intrigues of fishmongers in capital cities.

Lastly, the nation will occasionally want an augmentation of land forces, and this likewise must be provided for in calculating the population of a commercial country, so that the supplies for this purpose, in times of war, may not diminish agriculture, arts, and manufactures, the vitals of the state, by depriving them of useful hands.

That England had suffered a considerable diminution of its population, at the time when my treatises in quarto were first published, cannot be denied, since other authors of the first repute clearly proved it; but at present, it is affirmed by the great land-holders, gentlemen farmers, and other persons deeply interested in keeping up the exorbitant price of corn, that our population



lation has increased considerably within the last twenty years, and that the annual produce of the whole kingdom is not sufficient to supply the usual consumption, the consequence therefore is a real scarcity. Let us admit the assertion to be true, though it has never been proved; it will be proper then to enquire, whether the increase consists of such classes of the people, as will furnish such a sufficient number of active and industrious persons as are required for promoting the success of arts, manufactures, and commerce? If this question is answered in the negative, and it should appear beyond a doubt, that this increase chiefly consists of mere consumers, who do not contribute either by their skill or bodily labour to the general welfare of the nation, and such are the French, Italian, Flemish, Piedmontese, and Dutch refugees, who, owing to the revolutions on the continent, have for a long time been resident in the country: christian charity dictated the granting to these unfortunate people a temporary asylum; but political economy should have limited the duration of their abode amongst us. And political justice might have whispered in the ears of our ministers, that after the native professors of some arts and sciences had given the strongest proofs of loyalty, of attachment to the constitution, and of patience under the burthen of heavy taxes; they should not let foreigners, (whose

habits of life enable them to live upon the most ordinary and scanty food, to be cloathed with the coarsest materials, and to sleep on straw,) undermine learned, or ingenious Englishmen, by teaching, or by working on such very low terms, as to reduce them and their families, for want of employment, to absolute indigence.

But the selfish, who are often the rich and the noble, will say to his oppressed countryman, “ why should I employ you as preceptor to my son, whilst I can have a French Abbé, or a Professor in some of their universities, before the revolution, for the *twentieth* part of what you require ?” — “ Go, and starve in some obscure corner,” says another ; “ the polite and elegant Marquis de —, who was the admiration of Versailles at every court ball, shall teach my daughters, since he has condescended to be a dancing master !” Instances of this interested, and cruel partiality, in favour of foreigners are to be found in every capital town of Great Britain, and in most of our academies, and other seminaries of public and private education.

Another race that we are too sensible has multiplied upon us, is that of pampered valets, footmen, and ladies maids, who might have been made useful in agriculture, arts, and manufactures, if they had grown up to the age of majority at the farms, or in the country shopkeepers’ houses, where they were born : instead of which, they are insolent, lazy, and

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dainty



dainty consumers of the best food, and merely the appendages of prodigality and luxury. In the course of a fortnight, a regiment of infantry might be formed of the tall, stout, well-made, and handsome footmen, who are lounging before the shops in Bond Street, waiting with their carriages for their mistresses, who would not be so unfashionable, as to maintain in this capacity men advancing to the age of fifty, or in the smallest degree deformed ; or of too slight a form to perform the laborious part of husbandry, or the manual labour of the artizan and manufacturer.

In short, a diminution of useful hands in every part of the country is manifest, as well as a superfluity of idle ones in the capital.

The want of that redundancy of live stock, which the poor cottager raised on his little farm, and was obliged from necessity to carry to market, as soon as reared, is another cause of the present scarcity, and dearth of some kinds of provisions, such as poultry, pigs, pork, and eggs. The great farmers are better employed, for their own interest, than in rearing fowls, &c. for the markets ; and the breaking up of small farms has certainly had a tendency to prevent an increase of agricultural hands, for it has deprived young peasants of the means of settling in life in a family way ; and what has been the delusive reason assigned for this unnatural and impolitic measure ? It was urged in favour of enclosures, and enlarging farms, that the number

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ber of cottagers who dwelt on the side of heaths and commons, and on the borders, propagated a numerous race of poor children, who became a burthen on their respective parishes, and often brought their parents to the work-houses. But let the work-house registers be examined, and it will now be found that the number of poor of all ages who have been thrown upon the parish, has increased considerably since the abolition of small farms, the rise of provisions, and the fixed low price of agricultural wages.

As a remedy to this evil we have established schools of industry ; but as a well informed writer, to whom I am greatly indebted, says, “ Fields  
“ of industry are much better ; and while a  
“ field in Great Britain, admitting of culti-  
“ vation, can be found for every idler, let no  
“ idler be without a field.” Let us then expect that the landholders zealously concurring with the new imperial parliament, will without delay adopt such measures as may spread cultivation over every mountain and every valley in the three united kingdoms : their annual revenue will thereby soon acquire a real augmentation of twenty millions sterling.

Upon the whole statement under this head, it is evident that a defective population, highly prejudicial to the true interests of a commercial country, may subsist at the same time, with a partial increase of population.

## LECTURE IV.

## ON MANUFACTURES.

THE next principle on which the prosperity of an extensive commerce depends is, the establishment and support of manufactures.

The real wants of mankind are confined within such narrow bounds, that, strictly speaking, corn, and, for want of that, roots, fruit, water, milk, flesh, fowl, fish, the skins or fur of animals, and such instruments to prepare these for their several uses, as the most simple arts furnished in the state of nature, have always been considered as quite sufficient to satisfy all their natural necessities.

But as the human race increased, and formed themselves into large societies, imaginary wants multiplied with them, and new desires gave birth to new arts, which enabled them to gratify these imaginary wants; all, at first, included under the denomination of the conveniences of life, but which, in process of time, being varied and multiplied *ad infinitum*, were at length,  
more

more generally styled the luxuries and elegancies of life.

This is a concise, but just account of the origin of manufactures; under which head are comprised all the manual and mechanic arts. *A manufacturer*, I understand to be. any person who, by the labour of his hands, with or without the aid of machines, or implements of art, gives a new form to, improves, or carries to the highest degree of perfection, the natural products of the earth.

Annual premiums and occasional pecuniary rewards may be judged to be the only proper encouragement suited to the genius and station of the professors of the most useful, which, because they are common, are called vulgar arts; but experience shews the contrary; a title, or some other honourable distinction visible to the world, is an allurements not to be withstood by human vanity\*.

It will now be proper to demonstrate the effects of manufactures on the body politic.

\* An order of merit, once so much talked of, accorded to the fabricator of the best woollen or linen cloth, in proportion to its price, would be a wise imitation of the Chinese, whose ninth class of nobility, called Mandarins, consists of men distinguished for superior works of ingenuity, new inventions, improvements, and other extraordinary efforts of genius combined with industry.

First, A manufacturing nation will procure from its domains a greater quantity of natural products than one that has no manufactories.

Secondly, The cultivation of these products will require a greater number of inhabitants.

Thirdly, The art of giving new forms to, or improving the natural products, will furnish an increase of employment, and of the means of convenient subsistence, to additional classes of people.

Fourthly, The works of art, and of manufactories becoming known and esteemed in foreign countries, their inhabitants, not being possessed of the same advantages, and considering them as the means of increasing the enjoyments of life, will be excited by ideal wants, to require them as real necessities.

Fifthly, As the manufacturing art stamps an additional value on the products of nature, and foreign nations cannot gratify their desire of obtaining them, but by an exchange of commodities with the manufacturing people, or, in lieu thereof, by giving the full value of the manufactures in money; it follows, that the manufacturing people will receive *more*, either of the natural products of foreign nations, or in specie, than they gave; by which a balance of commerce must accrue to them, and their relative riches will be thereby increased.

Sixthly, Natural product, or money, which has been made the common medium of commercial exchanges, and the means of procuring the necessaries and comforts of life, being more abundant in a manufacturing country, emigrations of *useful people* will take place from other countries, and, provided no impolitic law prohibits it, a new accession of *industrious* inhabitants will be acquired, who will come in search of that ease and plenty, which industry, properly encouraged and directed, is sure to obtain, under the excellent constitution of Great Britain, and the patronage of our most gracious Sovereign.

Seventhly, The number of citizens multiplying incessantly in a manufacturing kingdom, will render it stronger, and better able to defend itself against foreign enemies, than a nation where no manufactures subsist.

It is a trite political maxim, that the riches and strength of a nation consists in the number of its inhabitants : but this, like many other dictatorial precepts, admits of strong exceptions. The quality and condition, as well as the dispositions of the mass of these inhabitants, and the manner in which they are employed, must be determined, before we subscribe to the maxim without reserve ; for instance, no country will be either the richer, or the stronger, that swarms with idle, debauched, debilitated, seditious, or turbulent, inhabitants.



Nor yet, where the majority of its fruitful population consists of soldiers; witness Turkey, contrasted with the small territories of Britain and Holland.

Neither must there be too great a proportion of nobility, and persons of independent fortunes, who are only consumers; for their example will introduce universal indolence; as is the case in Spain and Naples.

*Land* and *labour* together, are the sources of all wealth; without a competency of land, there would be no subsistence; and but a very poor and uncomfortable one without *labour*; so that *wealth* or *riches* consist either of a property in *land*, or in the joint products of *land* and *labour*.

But in countries where manufactures and commerce flourish, the value of labour will always be much greater than that of land.

Thus the annual produce of labour in England is of much greater value than the annual rents of the land; but their exact proportion to each other cannot be easily ascertained. It is commonly supposed that a farmer to live comfortably must make three rents of his \* land; and when we consider the coarseness of those

\* 1. For his landlord: 2. For maintenance: 3. For new implements, &c. and to lay by for children.

commodities usually expended in a farmer's house, in comparison of many others consumed by persons of affluent fortunes, the value of labour to that of land must be, with us, more than two to one.

*Wool* wrought into cloth is considerably advanced in its value. *Thread* may be of 100 times the value of the flax whereof it is made.

The value of the materials in watches, and almost innumerable other articles made of metals, is but small in comparison of the value of the workmanship. For instance; the *ballance spring* in a good watch, is worth more than a million times the value of the steel of which it is made.

Let us, in the next place, examine the principles upon which manufactories must be established, in order to attain all those desirable ends we have just passed in review, and to secure them in a permanent state.

And here, a number of different objects, all of equal importance, demand our close attention.

The first care of a prudent administration, when any ingenious persons propose the establishment of a new manufacture, must be, to examine strictly into the nature of the art or work, itself; in order to determine whether it will be of general utility, and is likely to be the object  
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of universal desire ; for, unless it will answer the purposes of universal commerce, by producing a superfluity beyond the demand for home consumption, it will be found to be too inconsiderable, in a great commercial country, to be entitled to the sanction of government.

If, on a strict scrutiny, the manufacture proposed to be established is not liable to the foregoing exception ; the next point will be, to ascertain the facility of procuring the first materials, (especially if they are not the natural produce of the country), and the price to be given for them : the cost of tools, of food, of labour in manufacturing the commodity, and other incidental charges, must be all nicely calculated. The value set upon the manufacture must necessarily be equal to all these expences. What it sells for, above all these charges, will be the manufacturer's profit ; and there must still be room left for another gain to be made by the tradesman who vends it for home consumption, or the merchant who exports it.

If it will bear all these advances, it will deserve national encouragement.

But if, after all, a better and cheaper commodity of the same kind can be imported from foreign countries with which we have a commercial intercourse, it will be the height of folly

folly to countenance such a manufacture, for it will be detrimental to the state.

When government has resolved to countenance any new manufacture, the next thing will be to consider of the properest situation.

It should always be as near to navigable rivers as possible, for the facility of conveying to them the first materials and secondary aids; and of transporting the fabricated commodities to the great inland towns for home consumption; or to the sea ports for exportation.

Where nature has denied these advantages, art must be employed to supply the defect, especially if fuel and provisions are not to be found in plenty on the spot, in other respects, most proper for establishing a manufactory. In this, and similar cases, the ancient commercial principle must be applied. Navigable canals must be cut, and easy communications between county and county, and with the sea coasts, must be opened, or the establishment will never\* flourish. Another point respecting the situation of new manufactories is, to choose places as remote as possible from large, luxurious, inland capital cities, where pleasures and extravagance have

\* This principle lay dormant in England for ages, when it was happily put in motion by the patriotism of the Duke of Bridgewater, and is now extending to various parts of the kingdom.

gained the ascendant ; for if a manufactory be set on foot in their neighbourhood, the workmen will be debauched, and become indolent, exorbitant, imbecile, and unprofitable\*.

Regard should likewise be had to the state of population in the country round about, that the new establishment may not suffer from a scarcity of hands, or an impossibility to procure them on reasonable terms ; where there are a great number of poor unemployed, or not fully occupied ; of a sober disposition and healthy ; there, a manufactory is most likely to succeed.

The clashing of interests must be particularly avoided. To set up a new manufactory on the same spot, where another has been long established, and of which there are no just complaints, is dishonourable and ungenerous, and may prove the ruin of both..

Lastly, the salubrity of the air must be attended to, where great numbers of people are to be employed, and closely connected together. Valuable establishments have failed, to the utter ruin of the undertakers, with the loss of many lives, owing solely to the error of having made choice of unhealthy situations.

\* The carpet manufactory carried on by German Moravians, and established at Chelsea, was obliged to be removed, on this account, and the dearth of provisions, to Exeter.

Our next object is, the first materials for arts and manufactures.

Those arts and manufactures, the first materials for which are the produce of the country where they are established, will justly claim the preference. Thus the woollen manufactory in England is considered as its staple, or chief permanently established manufactory \*.

The linen manufactory is very considerable in Ireland and Scotland, and increasing in England; but the first materials being chiefly imported from foreign countries, it can only rank in the second class of manufactures.

It is then a fixed principle of commerce, that to render the establishment of manufactures extensively beneficial and permanent, the first materials should be found at home †. But if these materials are to be drawn from foreign countries, the next principle to be invariably attended to is, not to impose any importation duty or any internal tax on them, in a great manufacturing kingdom.

The seduction of artists and manufacturers to leave their native country, in order to practise their art or skill in foreign nations should be punished in a most exemplary manner.

\* The fabrication of tin, lead, and copper into useful articles, belong to the same class.

† Therefore, the cultivation of flax should be more encouraged.



The clandestine exportation of the first materials, or of the tools and implements of arts and manufactures, should be subject to rigid penal laws, and corporal punishment.

The laws of England are excellent in respect to the said offences\*.

Such encouragement should always be given to artists and manufactures in a commercial country, as they cannot possibly receive in any foreign state.

One article of this encouragement should always be, to proportion their wages to the profits derived from their labours. This rule is not properly observed in England; for, to the great disgrace of the masters in some branches of arts, manufactures, and retail trades, the wages given to workmen and to servants are not equal to what is settled for them by law, in several well regulated governments on the continent, where all the necessaries of life are much cheaper than in England. On the other hand, we have some branches of the useful arts and of trade, in which the servants combine against the masters with impunity, and often gain a complete victory, by imposing their own conditions for their labour. Both these extremes should be carefully avoided, nor do we want wholesome laws for this pur-

\* See *Lex Mercatoria*, fol. 4th, edit. London 1791.

pose, but unfortunately, they are not duly enforced \*.

The very low wages of labourers in agriculture, and of some workmen in the hardware branches in England, compared with the prodigious profits of the masters, are subjects of just complaint. But masters in any art or trade, who, in order to undermine competitors, fraudulently give bounties, premiums, or rewards, to workmen, over and above the stated prices of their labour, thereby seducing them to leave their first masters; and workmen caballing and privately conspiring with others, to exact higher prices than those established by law or custom should be equally liable to heavy penalties, or corporal chastisement. In queen Elizabeth's reign, cases of this description were decided by courts composed of merchants.

As it should be an absolute rule to keep every work of art up to its standard with respect to its reputed quality, however the price may vary, all persons who put marks or stamps, which denote superior excellence, on commodities of inferior quality; or who deliver goods either for home consumption, or for exportation, by any reputed weight or measure which turns out defective, should have them returned on their hands, after

\* By 1 Anne, wages, demands, frauds, and deceits of workmen to be determined by two justices of the peace where the controversy arises.

burning a sample in the public market place of the town they came from, and proclaiming the maker to be a common cheat, as well as an enemy to the commercial prosperity of his country : for, short measures, defective breadths, inferior qualities given for superior, and counterfeit marks, names, and stamps, have done infinite mischief to several branches of our foreign trade.

It is a capital offence to forge a name, or a mark in money transactions, yet the injury done to individuals, or to the state, is not equal to that of putting false stamps and marks on manufactures deficient in quality and quantity to those they are intended to represent. In France, the prosecutions for the latter are criminal, not civil, as with us ; and all their artists and manufacturers, as well masters as workmen, are subject to the jurisdiction of the police.

The price of provisions, and indeed of all the necessaries of life, having increased considerably of late years, without a proportional advance in the price of labour, it follows next, in the order of my subject, that I should enter into the discussion of a point, that has been constantly debated in public, and in various treatises from the press ; a point respecting which scarcely two people agree in accidental conversation, and which has not yet been decided to the satisfaction of the parties interested.

It is said by one party, that the prosperity of a manufacturing kingdom depends on the cheapness of provisions, and the low rates of labour of every kind.

The opposition allege, that there cannot be a surer sign of the flourishing condition of arts, manufactures, and commerce, than the dearness of provisions, and the high price of labour.

A third opinion, but too well founded, is maintained by men of sound judgment, and independent principles. That in England, the rates of labour are by no means governed by the price of provisions; and therefore the masters in the several branches of manufactures and the useful arts have no right to complain that the high price of the necessaries of life has enhanced the value of their productions, since the price of labour is not augmented in any proportionate degree; so that it is only a pretext on the part of the masters to increase the profits of their several arts and manufactures and to impose on the consumers, for which purpose, says Mr. Hume in his Political Essays, they practise every artifice.

In a contest of such delicacy and importance, we cannot be too cautious, or exact, in advancing any thing that is not founded on the best information and the soundest reasonings; for the least mistake, if we have any influence with government, or any credit with the mass of the people, may be highly prejudicial to the commercial

cial interests of our country, by engaging the former in false measures, or by instilling into the other, wrong ideas.

The authority of writers, whose works have gained great credit with the public, should have its due weight; but facts and experience often contradict well-founded theories and ingenious speculations. To range through the wild field of controversy on this head, would take up too much of our time to little purpose; we shall therefore state in a concise manner such facts as are incontrovertible, and then draw inferences from them, founded on the true principles of commerce.

It is a fact sufficiently notorious, that the rates of labour have not risen in proportion to the increase of taxes falling upon the labouring poor, and the consequent high prices of provisions, and other necessaries of life.

That every tax laid on commodities is doubled by retail traders on the consumers. That while lands have been nearly doubled in value, raised by rack rents, and exorbitant fines for renewals of leases; the prices of labour have, in many callings, been diminished, in others have kept unvaried, and in none raised proportionally to the advancement of property, the enhanced prices demanded by the masters for all the works of art and manufactures, or the altered rates of things in general.

That men will not be laborious unless they have a prospect of reaping some enjoyment as  
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the reward of incessant toil ; and this enjoyment they can never hope for, under the circumstances just recited.

That the workman who never entertains the idea of diminishing the weight of his dependence on himself or others for his subsistence ; or of enjoying due repose and easy circumstances, suited to his station, will grow callous to common misfortunes ; he will see his family pining with hunger and nakedness, without using any extraordinary exertions of his abilities ; he will carry his industry no further, than to procure them temporary and partial relief ; and, out of the little he earns by constant labour, he will retain a reserve, to purchase the cup of oblivion ; to enable him to forget for a few hours occasionally, the galling yoke of double bondage to a hard-hearted mercenary master, and to a numerous distressed family.

Can it be expected, that the labour or industry of a person so situated, will be equal to that of him who is generously paid, in a degree proportioned to the advantages derived from his ingenuity, close application, or bodily labour ; and who, consequently, sets about his work with a cheerful, contented mind, which gives strength and activity to his body ! In the first case, you must be satisfied with the common drudgery of an enervated slave ; in the second, you may expect new efforts of ingenuity, extraordinary exertions of abilities, and every good effect of a



mind at peace, and a body in the vigour of health.

Lastly, it is evident that the present mode of living of our capital manufacturers, artists, and tradesmen, is totally different from that of their frugal ancestors in the same classes of society.

Costly dresses, carriages, livery servants, elegant furniture, luxurious tables, country houses, jaunts to watering places and other expensive amusements, distinguish the present race of great manufacturers, fashionable artists, and tradesmen; even tailors and milliners support an elegance of life, unknown in former times, and cruelly extracted from the drudgery of their workmen, and workwomen; and after all, our English broad cloth, and sundry other articles of general consumption, are inferior in quality to the same articles fabricated fifty years ago, when the difference between the master and the workman was not by many degrees so great as at present. The inference from the whole is, that the gentleman-farmer, grazier, manufacturer, artist, and tradesman, exact too large profits, in order to live like opulent gentry, and to do more than indemnify themselves for every tax, while they combine in their respective stations to keep down the price of labour, and to grind the face of the working poor.

It is now high time to recur to the true principles of commerce, from which I deduce the following maxims:

1. That

1. That the wages of all labouring people ought to rise in proportion to an enhanced price of provisions, and of the other necessities of life ; and I maintain that this was actually so regulated in Holland, Switzerland, and other free countries, resembling Great Britain, in respect to political freedom.

2. That the wages of workmen of every denomination in a country that means to support the credit of its manufactures, and an extensive foreign commerce, must be such as will give them a prospect of bettering their condition, and will permit them to enjoy occasional ease and plenty in their own way, suited to their humble sphere of life.

3. That if their wages bear a just proportion to the profits derived from their industry, this will always be the case, and their work will be performed with cheerfulness, vigour, expedition, and care to perfect it.

4. That such encouragement will not tend to idleness and debauchery, unless those vices are connived at by government, or have pervaded all ranks of life ; but on the contrary, that it will be a spur to industry, and will enable workmen to feed and clothe their families in a better manner, to the great benefit of retail trade ; and also that, from the foregoing circumstances, their children will become stronger, and be enabled at an earlier age, to labour for their own support,

support, which must be an additional advantage in large manufactories.

5. That the price of labour should be such as may induce the industrious poor to marry; the establishment of families being a fixed principle in the direction of extensive manufactories.

6. That the number of menial servants in a manufacturing kingdom, ought to be as small as possible; for their numbers deduct from provincial population, and render manufacturing hands scarce.

7. That it is an infamous practice, to settle with workmen, weekly, at a pay-table at an alehouse.

To conclude, if the manufacturing and labouring poor in England do not meet with better encouragement; if the masters are to continue to raise princely fortunes at their expence; if the credit of our manufactures is to suffer through frauds and deceits calculated to increase their emoluments; and if a scarcity of labouring hands from these and other causes, principally from destructive wars, should be universally complained of, we shall be obliged to have recourse to partial naturalization, and a more general introduction of mechanical machines.

A partial naturalization is not liable to those objections, that are brought against a general naturalization, which might, in the end, enable foreigners to extirpate the native stock; to  
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change the constitution, and from auxiliary aids in commerce, to become masters and possessors of the whole. In short, it is a leap in the dark, to give all the rights and privileges of citizens to an undistinguished herd of foreigners of different principles and classes.

And under no other circumstances but those of a plague, or devastations by fire, inundations, or the sword, should we admit of a general naturalization, or of the introduction of such machines as are calculated *nearly* to supply the labour of mankind.

But a partial naturalization, by occasional introductions of ingenious and industrious artists and manufacturers, who bring with them new inventions and improvements, as well as an addition to useful population, is a great political benefit to every commercial nation ; and it is always understood that such naturalizations are subject to wise regulations and limitations adapted to the commercial circumstances of any state that receives foreigners into her bosom, as native children.

With respect to mechanical machines, reflections on their tendency to diminish population made the celebrated Montesquieu find fault even with water-mills ; and other writers of great repute have complained of the abuse of mechanism, alleging that it is carried to too high a degree of perfection for the true interests of mankind.

But the mistake has been, in not drawing a line of distinction between those machines which are calculated to abridge, or facilitate the labour of mankind ; and those which are intended almost totally to exclude the labour of the human race.

To the first class, notwithstanding any popular clamours against them, a wise government will give all possible encouragement ; for both reason and experience have demonstrated their utility ; and of this kind are the plough, wind and water-mills, for grinding grain, hand-mills, looms, the lever, pullies, cranes, &c.

But to the latter species, every principle of humanity and of sound policy stands opposed : the saw-mill appears conspicuous in this class. A mill which works thirty-two saws, in two frames, may be managed by two men : these, if introduced into our dock-yards, &c. would exclude the labour of thousands of useful workmen.

In short, if we carefully review the reciprocal connexion and dependency on each other of agriculture, population, arts, manufactures, and inland trade ; we cannot possibly give our assent to the general introduction of such machines, as have a tendency by breaking one link in this regular chain, to derange and damage the whole.

Having now fully illustrated the principles which give life and vigour to the circulation  
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of inland trade, and form the basis of foreign commerce, our next business will be to note the principles by which UNIVERSAL COMMERCE must be conducted, confining ourselves solely to that object, and applying them to the present state of the commerce of the united kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, and of their settlements in foreign countries.



## LECTURE V.

## ON UNIVERSAL COMMERCE.

**I**F we could suppose it possible for nations to subsist secure and happy within themselves, without any commercial intercourse with each other, we should have no occasion to extend our inquiries any farther. For, all artificial wants being unknown in such societies of men, and no desire entertained of improving their situation and circumstances, they would not stand in need of any foreign commodities, to administer to the ease or convenience of life; neither could they think of sending any out of their own country, as they could have no idea of any utility or benefit to be derived from any article to be exchanged for them.

Some political writers, and several philosophers, have bestowed great encomiums on such systems of nature as we have just mentioned; in particular, they represent a people living without foreign commerce, as virtuous, frugal, temperate, and long lived; being utter strangers to all the vices which foreign luxuries introduce;

duce; and they assert, that as they have less cause, they are not so subject to quarrels, divisions, factions, tumults, insurrections, and murders, as those nations where pride, ambition, and avarice, (passions which the profits of commerce put in motion,) hurry men on to the most infamous excesses.

But these are only the suggestions of visionary theorists, who, indulging themselves in a life of solitude, and shunning the busy world, contemplate nothing but the beauties of their own Arcadian plans, and the defects of great commercial kingdoms.

There are, however, two objections to societies of men subsisting without commerce, which destroy the whole airy fabrick.

1. They can neither provide for their security, nor guard against the calamities of famine. For it is commerce which gives strength and security to a nation, by furnishing it with a maritime power; and it is commerce which procures a supply of the necessaries of life from foreign countries, when they fail at home, through bad seasons, sickness, or want of hands, in exchange for works of industry and art fabricated in times of health and plenty.

A nation without commerce is ever at the mercy of a powerful neighbour; their lives, and the necessaries of life they have produced for their subsistence, are held by a most precarious

rious tenure ; for the strong arm of an invader or conqueror may deprive them of both, whenever ambition or the wants of his subjects prompt him to the enterprize.

In short, a people so circumstanced could neither have fleets nor armies ; for their population would not provide sufficient numbers for the purposes of defensive wars, nor would they be possessed of treasures to purchase foreign aid ; and as they could never acquire relative riches by internal trade alone, so, without them, they must always be weak and defenceless.

The truth of these observations appears generally in the conduct of all considerable nations in the known world, which are more or less engaged in commerce. The very few of little note, that subsist without it, are in a savage state, poor, miserable, and brutal, a prey to each other, or to the first potent commercial people, who, with a view of gain, land an armed force on their territories, and reduce them to slavery.

But they are confirmed in a particular and interesting manner to Britons, in the contrast to be traced in the records of their country, between the past and the present state of the British Isles.

The invasions and conquests of the Romans, the Saxons, and the Danes, are lasting memorials of the inconsiderable, contemptible figure  
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this country made in the annals of the world, without commerce; and the great power and opulence of the same little spots of earth, in their present actual state, owing to their commercial resources, demonstrate clearly, that every principle, ancient or modern, that can contribute to the extension and security of the commercial interests of Great Britain and Ireland, ought to be closely studied, and properly applied to practice, by all her loyal subjects, according to their different ranks and situations in life.

Let us now inquire, by what principles universal commerce ought to be conducted, so as to answer the great and important purposes of supporting the power, riches, and national prosperity of these kingdoms, and of their foreign settlements, to whose commercial interests, I now mean to apply the general elements of commerce.

EXPORTATION, on the principle of *barter* was the first commercial operation of the ancients, but since the introduction of *money* as the medium of mercantile transactions, the idea of barter is become more confined and disused; though it is still practised in Laponia, Siberia, and some parts of Asia, Africa, and America. I shall however consider exportation at large, unconnected with barter, as the first principle of modern commerce.

To direct this principle, so as to make it operate the most beneficial effects for the community,

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should be the grand concern of administration, and in England this important charge is chiefly confided to the council of commerce, and the board of control for India affairs.

The superfluities of a country, whether consisting of the natural produce of its territories, or of the works of art and industry resulting from the ingenuity and labour of its inhabitants, are the proper objects for profitable exportation.

But the great skill of a statesman, or of the supreme directors of the commercial concerns of any nation, consists in ascertaining this superfluity. For want of due attention to this point, exportation sometimes proves highly impolitic, and the commerce founded on it, extremely pernicious to the state.

There cannot, properly speaking, be a superfluity of any commodity usually consumed by the inhabitants, till the average demand, *communibus annis*, is supplied; and a quantity laid up in store, for home consumption, sufficient to answer the extra-demands of the people, that may probably arise from contingent events.

Though this rule should be general with respect to all articles of home consumption; as the cupidity of the farmer, the artist, the manufacturer, or the merchant, may often tempt individuals, for the sake of large profits, to make copious exportations highly prejudicial to the public welfare; it is more particularly

binding with regard to provisions, and the other necessaries of life.

The average produce and consumption should be stated for some given number of years, and these should determine the quantity necessary to be laid up in store, to provide against a calamitous scarcity. This with respect to corn will greatly depend on the climate, and the fertility of the soil; therefore, the estimate of the quantity constituting a superfluity must vary in different countries.

Several commercial and political writers of repute advance it as a general maxim, "that during seven years of plenty, provision should be made for seven years of scarcity;" and though they confine it to corn, yet, it must equally hold good with respect to the other necessaries of life. There should be seven years cloathing, as well as seven years food in store for the inhabitants by the same rule; in short, whatever be the quantity necessary to guard against public distress, it is the duty of government to be well assured, that there is a superfluity beyond that stated quantity, before the ports are set open for exportation. For exportation, with a full assurance of national profit, is very distinct from private gain.

Navigation we have already noticed as *the second* principle of universal commerce, without which the *first* could not possibly operate any very beneficial



beneficial advantages to a nation ; for the exports from one country to another by land, could at best be but very limited and confined. A *third* principle, therefore, is still wanting to unite with the *first*, in order to give full strength and activity to the *second*, and that is *importation*.

A nation cannot possibly carry on an extensive commerce solely by exportation ; for though the exports of a country should be ever so considerable, and its natural products and manufactures were to be sent to foreign nations, and sold on the most advantageous terms, only a partial benefit would arise, favouring the individuals concerned in it, but not promoting the prosperity of the state in a due proportion ; because if the returns were all made in specie, the ships that carried out our merchandize would come home light, and mercantile navigation would not be encouraged in such a manner as to prove a nursery for seamen, to enable the state to form a maritime force for the protection of her territories and of the commerce of her subjects by sea ; which will be effected, when the two principles of exportation and importation, properly applied, unite their operations to support the employment of an immense number of ships and seamen.

When *exportation* and *importation* are properly conducted, they are the springs which regulate all the motions of the great machine of commerce ;

merce; but if any error happens, either through ignorance, inadvertency, avarice, or venality, in the direction of either; all the movements are deranged, and the machine itself is either considerably impaired, or totally destroyed.

It is therefore my duty, in the next place, to offer to your consideration, those mercantile maxims and regulations for the management of both, which, in the opinions of the best commercial writers, are calculated to establish and preserve a flourishing state of universal commerce.

I shall begin with the just maxims of exportation.

1st. We must export our natural products in the most improved state they will bear; this is the object of arts and manufactures.

2d. In our exportations we must not only take care that we send out the superfluities our own people can best spare, but we must pay attention to the necessities of those countries that demand our commodities. “If they cannot possibly do without them, nor yet be supplied with them elsewhere, it is a commercial principle (not very liberal I own) to endeavour to sell them dear, taking care however, that the high price cause not a less vent in quantity: but the superfluity of our commodities which foreign nations use, though they may also have the same, or similar merchandize from other countries, we must

must strive to vend as cheap as possible, lest we should lose a valuable branch of exportation, through the competition of rival nations."

3d. As far as is consistent with the political freedom of commerce, we must make our exports in our own ships; for by this method, they will be made of threefold value to the state. 1. Their intrinsic worth. 2. The profits of freight and insurance. 3. The multiplication of our seamen.

It is on this maxim, that in most commercial countries, the exportation of grain, and other necessaries of life, and of ammunition and stores, is prohibited to strangers, or in foreign bottoms; being allowed only to natives and in ships belonging to the countries from whence the exports are made. The British act of trade and navigation, 12 Cha. II. proceeded on this maxim.

4th. It is our interest to give those exports the preference, which are made to countries the most remote from the place where the commodities are shipped. The length of the voyage increasing the burthen of the shipping, the profit on freight, the number of mariners, and the value of the objects of such exports, so as to render such commerce more beneficial to individuals and to the community, than any other carried on with countries nearer home.

5th. Those exports will be highly advantageous,

geous, which are made to countries that supply us in return with the first materials for our arts and manufactures ; with any necessaries of life for home consumption ; or any commodities for re-exportation to other countries.

*A treble* freight arises out of this kind of barter, which renders it more advantageous than returns in specie, especially since remittances in paper have become so general.

Permit me to illustrate this maxim by a familiar instance.

Suppose I send I cargo of woollen goods to Flanders in an English ship of which I am the owner. Finding no demand in England for any commodity from Flanders, I desire my correspondent to remit me the value of my merchandize in specie ; which he will do, by bills of exchange, or by ordering me to draw on him ; and here ends the commercial operation. With respect to my ship, it must either return in ballast, or time must be lost in procuring a back freight. But let me send my cargo to Virginia instead of Flanders, and my ship may return laden with tobacco, here a second freight is immediately gained : part of the tobacco being destined for home consumption, a duty to the state is paid on its importation to the advantage of the public revenue : the remainder I re-export to Germany, thus a third freight accrues ; and if I barter again in Germany, there is a probability

probability that a fourth profit of freight will be gained by the ship, before this compound mercantile operation, which had its origin in my exportation of our own manufactures, is finally completed.

6th. “ The exportation of our natural products and manufactures should be free from all duties. But, if from the particular circumstances of a nation, it be found necessary to depart from this maxim, by imposing duties outwards on our native commodities, great care should be taken, that the business of the merchant exporters should not suffer any delay at the custom-house, through embarrassing formalities; for the loss of one *tide*, is very often the overthrow of a voyage.”

7th. It will be sometimes necessary to give bounties on the exportation of our natural products and manufactures, as an encouragement to the cultivators, and to the proprietors of manufactories, to stimulate them to such exertions of industry, as may be the means of producing the largest superfluity or surplus, beyond the quantities required for home consumption, so that universal commerce may be rendered more extensive and beneficial.

The bounty on corn has been already mentioned, and the objections to it properly stated; it remains only to observe in this place, that those on British-made sail cloth, on British manufactures



manufactures of silk, and on British and Irish linens, have never been liable to any objection whatever, but on the contrary, are generally acknowledged to have been the means of bringing those manufactures to the highest degree of perfection, and of making them articles of foreign commerce, whereas, before those bounties were granted they furnished only sufficient quantities for home consumption.

8th. It is advantageous to export bullion and coin, and it contributes to increase our national wealth, instead of exhausting it, as some commercial writers have asserted. It has been a popular error for ages, to exclaim against sending of bullion and coin out of Great Britain; and the prohibitions of such exports in Spain, and occasionally in Portugal, the great depositaries of gold and silver, have been brought to prove that it is impolitic to suffer the exportation of the precious metals; but on the other hand, it is observed, that Venice, Florence, Genoa, and Holland permit it, and derive great benefit from making them articles of commerce.

Those, who wrote against the exportation of bullion and coin formerly, had no conception of the vast fabrick of mercantile *credit*, which has since been erected upon the honour and good faith of the reputable merchants of all the commercial nations of Europe: they could have no idea of our extensive *paper circulation* both at home and abroad, which has quite altered the



state of commercial affairs, and has enabled us to export coin and bullion on advantageous terms, whilst an eighth part of the coin formerly required, is sufficient for the purposes of internal circulation.

It is now universally known, that it is not any given quantity of the precious metals, carefully kept in a nation, and prohibited to be exported, that makes such a nation the richer. The very reverse is experienced in Spain, which, with all its mines of gold and silver, is comparatively poor and feeble : whereas, some free states, particularly Great Britain and Holland, by making them articles of commerce, have created new treasures, and increased both the natural and relative riches of their respective inhabitants. The ultimate balance of trade, of which we shall treat more at large, under a distinct head, is indeed usually reckoned in money, and it is by this scale that its profits are commonly calculated. But as money itself is of no further use, but merely as a kind of instrument for the circulation of products or commodities, a very beneficial commerce may be carried on between two nations, without either having to receive any money, on balancing their accounts. Paying large sums of money to foreign nations occasionally for other articles of commerce, does not necessarily infer a loss by such traffic. Let us suppose for instance,

instance, that last year, Great Britain paid a balance upon the whole of its foreign commerce, of one hundred thousand pounds in specie, but that the national stock of necessaries, of valuable materials for our manufactures, of naval stores for our security, and of commodities proper to be re-exported to advantage, were augmented to double that amount; by the vulgar erroneous way of reckoning, we must have lost 100,000*l.* by our commerce last year; whereas it is evident that we have gained to that amount in valuable stock, and that we could not have made this profit on our commercial exchanges, without exporting bullion and coin. Again, let us suppose a ship bound to some foreign port, partly laden with corn from Great Britain, and having other merchandize on board for other ports, would it be sound policy, if the owner or master knows that at these delivering ports he can take in double the amount of his cargo in materials for the manufactures of his own country, to prohibit him carrying out coin or bullion to purchase commodities that will prove so highly beneficial to the nation by adding to its stock, valuable materials to produce future large profits.

In fine, there are but two rational objections to the exportation of coin; the first is, when so great a quantity is carried out, that there is not a sufficient currency left in the nation, to be the medium of our internal exchanges at home; this

has been frequently complained of as the real state of the case with respect to our silver coin ; but it is a great mistake, our silver coin is hoarded up by the bank, private banks, pay-offices, &c. as an expedient against extraordinary, unforeseen, sudden demands, that they may avoid stopping payment, by making satisfaction in silver ; an operation which gains time, and affords an opportunity for fresh receipts of money, to answer the extra demands.

The second exception is, when money is sent out of the kingdom, never to be returned in any valuable commodities, nor indeed in any article of exchange whatever. This is the case when travellers carry away large sums to be expended in foreign countries, or intending to reside in them a considerable time. If for any pecuniary profit the subjects of Great Britain clandestinely carry out gold coin, instead of bills of exchange or letters of credit ; they do a real injury to their native country ; for which the law has wisely provided a remedy, by empowering the officers of the customs to seize any considerable sums of gold coin, found in the baggage of any person about to leave the kingdom, not having been declared, and duly entered, by licence, as an article of commerce. These exceptions apart, it is a true principle of commerce, to export bullion and coin.

9th. The

9th. The riches of a commercial country will depend on its exports of native products and manufactures, and its re-exports of imported foreign commodities, exceeding, in *quantity* and *value*, the amount of its imports solely for home consumption. But the calculations on this head must not be made in a partial, limited manner. The exports, imports, and re-exports of *no single year* whatever, can be allowed as an example. It must be an *average* amount of some given number of years, to allow time for the disposal of the excess of the imports of any one year, by re-exportation in another.

10th. Great care should be taken that no article of customary export should totally fall off. If it is suspended for a time, through any extraordinary cause, it is the duty of the administrators of the commercial affairs of a maritime state, to represent to the legislature, the deficiency in the general exports occasioned thereby, that such laws may be enacted, as will have a tendency to revive the suspended branch of commerce, especially if it has been highly beneficial to the general interest of the nation. Had this been done with respect to corn, we should not have had to deplore the present scarcity. All authorities, both ancient and modern, subscribe to the rectitude of the following principle: "That the true interests of a commercial nation require a vigilant attention to their *exports* and *imports*." We must therefore, in the  
next

next place, investigate the true maxims of importation.

1st. The first objects of importation in a manufacturing country, are the raw materials to be employed in their various works of art and industry. Consequently, in our commercial connexions, we must give the preference to those nations which supply us with them in the greatest abundance, and on the most reasonable terms ; even though they consume little or none of our products or manufactures, and that we are even obliged to pay for them with specie.

It will be found policy to grant all possible indulgencies to such countries ; slight injuries must not be hastily resented ; and, in fact, a sort of dependency will grow up which may subject a nation requiring foreign materials for her manufactures to many inconveniencies. The great utility, therefore, of raising the first materials at home, or, if the soil will not admit of it, the expediency of planting colonies, or of encouraging those that are already established, to cultivate those articles, is self-evident. We shall hereafter point out the importance of the British colonies on this account alone.

2d. No import duties should be laid on such articles entering the nation where they are wanted, nor should they be subject to the formalities and delays in landing them, to which  
other

other merchandize are liable; but, proper inspection being made, they should be landed, discharged, and expedited, with all possible dispatch, to the inland provinces where they are to be employed.

3d. If such encouragement be found requisite, *bounties* must be given to the cultivators abroad, or to the merchants importing such articles, to excite them to employ their capitals and their shipping in bringing them home, in preference to other commodities.

4th. The importations of a manufacturing country should chiefly consist of the products of other countries in their natural state, or with as little labour as possible bestowed upon them, in order, that the poor labouring subjects of the nation importing them may find employment in preparing and fitting them for the use of the manufacturers.

5th. Imports of manufactured or finished commodities should be permitted only from countries receiving from the importers, a greater quantity, and more in value of their natural products or manufactures.

But there are particular circumstances which will justify a reversal of this rule; that is to say, the imports may exceed the amount of the exports, and still be beneficial to the importing nation; even though the exports should consist only of natural product, (such as corn), and the imports of manufactured commodities. Suppose,



pose, for instance, that there is a large demand on Great Britain, from a third country, for the manufactured commodities you draw from the country to which you have sent your corn, you have no other limitation to set to your imports in such a case, but that which the demand dictates; you may even pay a balance in specie for the manufactured commodities, and, after all, greatly promote the commercial interests of your own country\*.

6th. Imports of manufactured commodities from countries which consume considerable quantities of your staple commodities should be encouraged, even though you have manufactures of the same articles at home, provided always, that you lay a duty of at least *fifteen per cent.* on the imported commodity; for, if your home manufacture cannot vie with the foreign one after it has paid this duty, together with the charges of freight, insurance, the merchant importer's profit, and other incidental expences, it ought not to be encouraged; for, though individuals may gain by it, the establishment will be a loss to the nation, and the labouring poor may be better employed than in such undertakings.

7th. Imports of manufactured commodities, from countries which do not consume any of

\* See Sir Josiah Child on Trade.

the manufactures of the country importing them, ought to be entered only for re-exportation, but the permitting them to be imported for home consumption, even though they were to pay a duty of 40 *per cent.* is highly impolitic; and if you have a rival manufacture at home, it is pernicious in the extreme.

8th. Clandestine importations should be prevented by the severest laws, and by the most vigorous, diligent, and indefatigable exertions of the power and strength of government to carry them into effectual execution, for they are capital felonies in commerce.

9th. All merchandize imported solely for the purpose of re-exportation to other countries should be enterable duty free.

The subjecting such importations to duties, which are to be recovered by drawback debentures, is a tedious embarrassing transaction, and a grievance of the first magnitude; by obliging the importers to make large deposits in ready money.

A small transit duty for the use of the King's warehouses, officers, &c. is all that ought to be paid on the entrance of merchandize, that is to be transported to other countries, following the examples of Hamburgh, Holland, and other foreign countries.

Having thus stated the general maxims for regulating exportation and importation, which

are the vitals of universal commerce ; it will be proper, in the next place, to discuss a subject, which has greatly divided our commercial writers, and on which the most intelligent merchants differ in opinion.

It has been already noticed, that incorporated mercantile companies, enjoying charters, granting them certain rights and privileges to the exclusion of the other subjects of a state, not being members of those commercial associations, are establishments founded on true commercial principles ; and I now proceed to maintain this assertion, and to answer all the objections that have been advanced against them.

## LECTURE VI.

## ON PUBLIC COMMERCIAL COMPANIES.

THE important question which now requires our deliberate consideration, and final judgment is: Whether the immediate prosperity, and future security and extension of universal commerce, is best provided for by the establishment of public companies, (enjoying the sanction of government with peculiar privileges, but subject to political restrictions), or by allowing a free and unlimited liberty of commerce to every individual of a state, who conforms himself to its commercial laws and customs?

I have endeavoured to state this question with all possible precision, because it is necessary to be very correct, having the unpopular side of the contest to defend, and the prejudices and passions of the majority of the people to combat, strengthened by very great authorities.

Several authors of repute in the last century oppose the establishment of commercial companies; their writings are the basis of the opinions

of the speculative theorists of the present times, and many of these are members of parliament and respectable merchants \*.

The substance of their objections to such limitations of commerce shall be laid before you, and I flatter myself I shall refute them to your satisfaction.

Company in commerce, is defined to be an association of several merchants, and other persons, who unite in one common interest, and contribute by their stock, their counsel, and their activity to the setting on foot, or supporting, some lucrative commercial establishment. There is also, another species of mercantile associations, called companies, who trade not upon a joint stock, but only enter into a legal contract to carry on particular branches of commerce, exclusively, under certain regulations.

The commerce of Great Britain is carried on partly, by companies of the two kinds just mentioned, and partly, by private merchants. Formerly, we reckoned nine public commercial companies in England, *viz.* the Hamburgh, Russia, Eastland, Turkey, East India, Royal African, Canary, Hudson's Bay, and South Sea. —I place them in the order of their several foundations. Of all these companies only three re-

\* See the parliamentary debates 1767 and 1768, against the East India company.

main, which carry on their commerce by joint-stock, and enjoy exclusive privileges under charters, confirmed by acts of parliament; these are, the East India, South Sea, and Hudson's Bay companies. With respect to the others, the trade of some of them is thrown open to all the subjects of Great Britain, and any person may be admitted a member by paying a small fine, and agreeing to submit to their respective bye-laws and regulations.

The general objections then, to all exclusive charters, rights, and privileges, will apply in their fullest force to our principal commercial company, the East India, which stands unrivalled by any other in the known world. The earliest, and indeed the most respectable advocate for unlimited freedom of commerce, in opposition to companies, is Sir Josiah Child, whose arguments I shall give in his own words.

“All restrictions of trade are naught; and consequently no company whatsoever, whether they trade on a joint stock, or under regulations, cannot be for the public good, except it may be easy for all or any of his Majesty's subjects to be admitted into all or any of the said companies, at any time, for a very inconsiderable fine; and if the fine exceed twenty pounds, it is too much.” He then instances the disadvantages our East country and Russia trade laboured under in his time, *from the management* of their respective companies in England; whereby our trade to those countries was in effect wholly



wholly lost, while the Dutch, without companies, increased theirs to above forty times the amount of ours ; from whence, he says, may be inferred ;

1. That restrained, limited companies are not alone sufficient to preserve and increase any trade.

2. That limited companies, though established by act of Parliament, may lose a trade.

3. That trade may be carried on to any part of Christendom, and increased without companies.

4. That we have declined more, at least have increased less in those trades limited to companies than in others, where all his Majesty's subjects have had equal freedom to trade.

It is to be observed that Sir Josiah Child's arguments are extended to private companies, and to corporation charters, stating that they are as detrimental to inland trade, as public companies to universal commerce ; and indeed every objection to the one, is equally conclusive against the other ; proceeding upon the same principles, " that of allowing free and unlimited licence of trade both at home and abroad, to all the subjects of a free state."

Mr. *Cary*, likewise, in his discourse on trade, particularly finds fault with our East India company, as a pernicious establishment ; because in his time, they exported our bullion, and very little of our natural products, or manufactures,

while they brought home great quantities of commodities completely manufactured, which hindered the consumption of our own. But the state of our India company's affairs is quite altered of late years ; and I shall make it appear, before I quit this subject, that our commerce with the East Indies, on its present footing, is one of the chief sources of the power and commercial prosperity of Great Britain.

And, indeed, it is greatly to be lamented, that our most celebrated commercial writers have employed their pens principally in describing the state of trade in their time, in pointing out defects in its administration, and in proposing remedies suited to the situation and circumstances of the kingdom when they wrote ; instead of giving us the general, invariable Elements of Commerce, and illustrating maxims, which no change of time, or alterations in the state of trade, can invalidate ; and this is what renders most of them, in a great measure, useless.

In the present Lectures, on the contrary, it is intended to communicate only the true principles of commerce, and to try the existing, actual, operations and effects of our mercantile establishments solely by the test of those principles.

And on this ground, I proceed to prove that public commercial companies are beneficial establishments even in free states ; and that they ought not to be suppressed, as some modern  
H 2 authors,

authors, and eloquent speakers in the house of commons, have maintained of late years. For, in the first place, the history of former times attests, that it was the necessity of putting commerce under certain regulations and restrictions, not so advantageous to individuals, but more equitable and beneficial to the community, which gave rise to public trading companies in some of the free states of Europe, and particularly in Great Britain.

2dly. It is well known, that the great object of all trade is *gain*: Now, individuals are more apt to pursue this object by indirect means than public companies, which are subject to the political control of government; for private persons, being subject to no regulations, but those of the general laws of commerce, may, for a considerable time, carry on a traffick highly profitable to themselves, but extremely prejudicial to their country, without violating those general laws. This was evidently the case with respect to the exportation of corn at the time of laying on the embargo in the summer of the year 1767: corn being then at the price allowing free exportation, the cupidity of certain merchants, excited them to ship such immense quantities, that London was in danger of being subjected to a dearth, if that measure had not been instantly taken, and the corn kept at home.

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Had this branch of commerce been in the hands of a public company, it could not well have happened; for the contending interests in such companies, their open assemblies, their public debates, and their situation with respect to parliament, all combine to give government an opportunity of inspecting into, and of controlling the administration of their affairs, when they are found to be carrying on any branch of commerce detrimental to the nation. It is exactly the same with regard to imports; private individuals may find it very advantageous to import useless articles of foreign luxury, extremely hurtful to their country; and whilst a fortune is to be made more rapidly by such exports and imports, than by those which promote the national interest more than that of private subjects, they will pay the greatest attention to such branches of commerce, in preference to all others.

3dly. *Competition* or rivalry between private adventurers has often proved the bane of particular branches of commerce; but when it subsists between the public companies of one nation and those of another, its rival in arms, arts, and commerce, it generally proves highly beneficial to that nation, whose commercial affairs are conducted by their public companies with the most skill and integrity.

4thly. The intrigues and cabals of private inland traders, the stratagems and unfair practices

tices they make use of to undermine each other; and the frequent failures which are the consequences of these base transactions, demonstrate but too evidently, that the lust of gain left to itself, will obliterate all sentiments of humanity and every obligation due to civil society. The same cause will produce the same effect in foreign commerce; and I will venture to affirm, that there cannot be a more destructive measure proposed, with respect to any great branch of general commerce, than to suffer private British subjects to carry it on without any limitations or restrictions from government. Instead of rivalling foreigners, the competitors of their country, they would supplant each other, and, if an extraordinary profit were to accrue from it, perhaps purchase the manufactures of rival nations, and send them to foreign markets, under the denomination of British. A felony in commerce of this kind was committed some years since, by a private merchant in London. A public company could not have been guilty of such a fraud; the very proposition from any of its members must have been received with scorn, and rejected with indignation. But suppose it otherwise, and that a corrupt majority could be capable of agreeing to such a proposal, or any other equally injurious to the national interest; the minority, some of whom must be either members of parliament, or respectable merchants  
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having weight and influence with government, would undoubtedly represent the base measure in its proper light, and an act of the legislature, might prevent its being carried into execution. No such opportunity is given by private adventurers ; transactions of the most impolitic nature in commerce may pass unnoticed for many years, if they conduct their correspondence with secrecy and dexterity.

In fact, by examining the most ancient records of commerce, I find, that public companies were founded in every commercial nation, to preserve peace between fellow-subjects, and to prevent clandestine frauds and violences committed by merchants and traders, in order to undermine each other ; which practices, menaced in the end, the ruin of the commerce of the countries where they had prevailed.

And I totally dissent from Child's third assertion, that commerce to any extent, for the public benefit of any nation, can be carried on without public companies.

In proof of this, let us only suppose, that the foundation of a most beneficial and extensive commerce is proposed to be laid by the people of Great Britain, with the inhabitants of a powerful, warlike, but savage nation, in some remote region, possessing immense tracts of lands, with a great abundance and variety of valuable native commodities ; and having the dominion of the



feas in those parts. I know but of three plans that could be proposed for carrying the design into execution. Either it must be undertaken by the sovereign; or by an association of wealthy subjects, to whom certain privileges and immunities must be granted, in consideration of the risk they run by advancing very large sums of money in the adventure. Or, finally, all the inhabitants possessed of property must be invited to engage in it, and be stimulated to exert themselves to the utmost of their respective abilities, by the allurements of gain, and a full assurance from government, that the new commercial establishment should be free and open to all adventurers; and subject to no restrictions but the general commercial regulations of the kingdom. A solemn promise of national protection would likewise issue from the crown in this case.

To the first of these plans, the subjects of Great Britain would never willingly submit. For they would consider any capital branch of commerce, exclusively in the hands of the king, as a grievance of the first magnitude, and a violent encroachment on the rights of the people.

To the second proposition, none but men who are influenced by selfish motives, misguided by weak judgments, or blinded by prejudices, can start any objection of such force, as to make it eligible either to take it up on the third plan, or totally to abandon the undertaking.

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But the following considerations will point out the impracticability of adopting the third scheme.

1. Large capitals in merchandise proper for the undertaking, or in specie to purchase them, must be the basis of new commercial connexions with foreign countries, beyond the abilities of private individuals to furnish.

2. Mercantile credit, to a latitude, the bounds of which can hardly be prescribed, is essentially necessary for the success of such enterprises, even at their commencement, and much more so, when they are firmly established.

3. A naval and military force, proportioned to the nature of the undertaking, will likewise be requisite to act defensively in support of the adventurers; and sometimes even offensively.

4. The exportation of the manufactures of the country engaging in such commercial establishments, to a very considerable extent, must be the chief object of the government, and where are the individuals to be found, independent of companies, or similar associations of large bodies of men, capable of answering this valuable purpose to the community.

Nor can it be imagined that any set of men would meet together, and agree to deposit, some ten, others twenty, or thirty thousand pounds, to open a new and extensive commercial intercourse with the inhabitants of some remote region,

region, suppose Asia, without fixing upon certain rules of conduct, and proper means of securing their property vested in each others hands for the general benefit of the whole? Or is it likely that they should obtain that universal mercantile credit at home, as individuals, which they might reasonably expect, when associated and formed into a body corporate, responsible for the debts of each member if contracted in the name of, and by the consent of the company.

But if it is expedient to establish trading companies, it is contended, that every subject in a free state should be admissible as a member on paying a small fine, and submitting to its laws and regulations. To this I reply, that the fine, or pecuniary consideration for admission ought to vary, according to the nature of the company, the system of its constitution, and the importance of its commercial transactions. A fine of twenty pounds may be more than sufficient to entitle a person to become a member of a company, which does not carry on their trade by joint stock, and wherein the members cannot lay claim to any share of the profits made by the company; and are only incorporated in order to carry on their commerce individually to particular countries exclusively, under the protection of government, and subject to certain bye laws and regulations, legalized by the state, for the greater security and convenience of such particular branches

branches of foreign commerce. Such for instance is, our African Company.

But surely no one will contend that a small consideration ought to entitle any man to become a member of a capital commercial company, trading on a joint stock, and where the profits, which are very great, are to be divided amongst all the members; besides this, the rights of debating and of voting, derived from the freedom of the British constitution, make part of the immunities enjoyed by every member of our public companies; and can it be thought either reasonable or equitable, that any number of members, received into a company for small considerations, should be enabled, from selfish or partial motives, to influence others by eloquent speeches, or by their own votes, to form a majority in favour of partial or pernicious measures, which may diminish the profits, lessen the value of the capital, or otherwise injure the whole society, and counteract the more salutary designs of other members, who have subscribed large capitals to the common joint stock of the company, or have afterwards purchased large shares in it with great sums of money? Should members admitted for a small consideration be thus empowered to undermine the plans of the directors, who are generally elected to that office, on account of their long experience, great skill, and capital interest in the general concerns of  
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the company? Every sensible man will most assuredly put a negative on these questions.

I very readily admit that there ought not to be an absolute exclusion of any subject of a free state from its public companies; but, on the other hand, the pecuniary consideration for admission ought to be regulated by the constitution and circumstances of the company; which may make one thousand pounds as small a fine to one company, in proportion to the advantages of becoming a member, as five shillings to another, from which little or none are to be expected. And I humbly apprehend, that what I have advanced on this subject is sufficient to take off the limitation prescribed by Sir Josiah Child, and to shew that the fine for admitting subjects generally, to be members of some public companies, may exceed fifty times the sum he proposes, and not be too much.

The exportation of our manufactures must be the first object of all considerable commercial establishments (and I mean to apply my arguments only to such); the very idea therefore, of a large capital, sufficient to purchase the great quantities of manufactures to be exported, supposes an association of a number of opulent men for that purpose: but importation of valuable commodities, for the use of our manufactures, or for home-consumption, might be a secondary object: and, lest the first should not succeed to the  
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height of expectation, a capital in specie must be provided, to insure the success of the second, that the expedition might answer on the whole. Again, it might happen, that the number of persons associated to carry on the new establishment could not furnish a capital so large as should be judged requisite to answer these views; or, on the spot, they might find it advantageous to purchase a quantity of commodities for importation, exceeding the amount of their bartered stock and their fund in money: in either of these cases, we must see the necessity of mercantile credit; and the consideration both of the magnitude of the capital, and of the requisite extent of mercantile credit, naturally suggests to us the obvious necessity of forming a commercial association, or company, to facilitate the design, and to secure the property of each individual adventurer.

Can it be imagined, that any set of men would meet together, and agree to deposit, some ten, others, twenty thousand pounds, to open a new and extensive commercial intercourse with the inhabitants of Asia, without fixing on certain rules of conduct, and certain means of securing their property in each other's hands? Or is it likely that they should acquire that universal mercantile credit at home as individuals, which they might reasonably expect when associated and formed into one body, the whole being



being answerable for the debts of every individual contracted in the company's name?

Could any other method be devised in such a case, so secure, so permanent, or so creditable, in the eyes of their fellow-subjects, as to get their regulations, agreed upon amongst themselves, converted into laws; by a charter confirmed by act of parliament?

Is it reasonable, that any set of men, thus adventuring large fortunes, and perhaps their persons, in an enterprize, which, while it promises gain to themselves, likewise furnishes employment to a number of mechanics, manufacturers, tradesmen, and mariners, and, in the end, increases the wealth of the nation, should not be entitled to some particular rights and privileges not granted to all their fellow-subjects; peculiarly such as might prevent others from reaping the fruit of their enterprize? or is it probable, that they would obtain universal credit, if such exclusive rights and privileges were not considered as the best means of insuring success?

In whatever point of view I consider the first settlement of a grand commercial enterprize, it seems impracticable, without the concurrence of a number of wealthy citizens associated together, submitting to binding obligations, which establish confidence; making one common stock for the benefit of the company, and enjoying certain exclusive rights and privileges, as a security and a recom-

recompence for the hazard and disbursements of the undertaking. I shall therefore make no scruple to maintain, that Sir Josiah Child, and others, who have asserted, that commerce might be carried on to any part of the world without companies, meant to apply this maxim only to such trades as were actually established, without recurring to the origin of any commercial institution. Indeed, from what immediately follows, it is plain, that Child drew his inferences from the situation of some branches of commerce, which, in his time, had declined under the administration of companies. “ The East country and Russia trade had been almost lost, by the mismanagement of their respective companies ;” but this is no argument to prove that they are not necessary to establish new commercial foundations. Nor do any of the complainants against exclusive companies propose any method to open and settle fresh commercial intercourses with foreign nations, independent of companies. The argument respecting the Dutch stands exactly upon the same footing ; for though their inland trade and some branches of their general commerce are thrown open to all the inhabitants of the United Provinces, yet it is well known, that their principal mercantile establishments in foreign countries owe their origin (like the British) to companies. Indeed, nothing is so vague as the idea of a new settlement of any kind, without  
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an association, a charter, or an act of parliament granting and securing certain rights and privileges to the settlers. Commercial views gave rise to the establishment of our colonies, and they had charters from the beginning; which were granted to companies; such were the North-Virginia, London, and Plymouth New England companies, &c. all which I only mention to prove, that such were always the jarring interests and the strong prejudices of mankind, that no great undertaking could ever be set on foot; without uniting a certain number in a body, and binding them down to certain regulations; and as to commercial enterprizes, it is as apparent, that men could never be engaged to risk their lives and fortunes, without a security that they should reap the fruits of their adventures; and this security consists in granting them exclusive rights and privileges.

But such exclusive rights are seldom granted in perpetuity, by the British Crown or government; they are generally for a long term of years; those who are against all chartered companies availing themselves of the reserved power in the crown to resume them, insist on the expediency, equity, and sound policy of cancelling them, and of laying the branches of commerce, monopolized in virtue of such charters, open to all the subjects of the realm, after the expiration of the term of years for which they were granted.

It is said, that the commerce set on foot by means of such encouragements being firmly established, and the first adventurers having received the most ample indemnification and recompence for the capitals they employed, and the hazard of the enterprize ; the public, for whose benefit they were ultimately intended, should be at full liberty to embark on the same bottom, and to share the future profits of the plan. For my own part, though a warm advocate for the civil and religious freedom of all my countrymen, I cannot think this claim well founded ; for it is just the same, as if we were to pretend to the right of purchasing an improved estate, consisting of the best cultivated lands, on the same terms as if it consisted only of a barren, uncultivated desert. I can see no reason why a chartered company, which has raised, improved, and perhaps carried to the highest degree of perfection, a most valuable branch of commerce, equally beneficial to a number of individuals and to the state, should not continue to enjoy its ancient privileges, as the means of continuing the flourishing situation of their commerce, and of enriching their country. But if they have suffered the branch of commerce they undertook, to decline, and either through the ignorance, indolence, or avarice of its managers, the company is on the point of losing it, it is then the duty of government to interpose, to take  
away

away privileges which they do not merit, and to invite all its subjects to trade to that part of the world on a free, unlimited footing.

This experiment has been tried; but, as a further proof of the utility of chartered companies, let it be remembered, that it has never answered. No branch of commerce (at least to my knowledge) that was in a declining state in the hands of a company, has been revived and improved by private adventurers. On the contrary, the very reverse has happened in England; which is a full refutation of Sir Josiah Child's fourth inference.

Our East India and Bank companies\* have brought the commerce and mercantile credit of Great Britain to such a degree of perfection, as no age or country can equal; and to suppose that this national success could have been accomplished by private merchants, or even by companies not trading on a joint stock, is an absurdity that does not deserve serious consideration.

\* It may surprize many persons to find the Bank described as a chartered commercial company; but if we reflect a moment, on the support given to commerce, by their discounting bills of exchange, purchasing bullion and foreign coin; and issuing current notes, which facilitate the transport of personal property, and promote the general circulation of wealth in the nation; we must admit that it has all the properties of an exclusive trading company, though its commodities are chiefly money.

For what purpose then should so great a revolution take place, as the dissolution of these companies? For none surely, but to gratify the private views of selfish individuals, who would never desire any branch of commerce to be laid open to them, if they saw it in a declining state in the hands of a company; yet it is in such cases only that it ought to be laid open; and, were men influenced, as they pretend, by the public good, it would be under such circumstances that they would petition for a free trade.

Is it probable that any private adventurers should ever have it in their power, or should so accord in opinion, having the ability, as to lend the capital sums of money to the nation, from time to time, at low interest, which have been advanced by our India, South-sea, and Bank companies, whereby the extraordinary exigencies of the state in time of war have been supplied, without levying sudden and heavy contributions on the people? But this subject more properly belongs to the Elements of Finances; I therefore only introduce it in this place, as another great national benefit derived from our present great chartered companies, so idly and vulgarly styled monopolies.

But two more changes are brought against the East India company. "They do not increase the quantity of woollens they export, but rather confine themselves to the quantity stipu-



lated by their charter." In reply to this, let it be observed, that we have other branches of commerce, in which our exports in woollen manufactures are greatly augmented; and, if it was not practicable to increase them to India, we have no reason to complain of the India company, since they have made ample amends, by opening new sources of commerce; by furnishing us with articles for re-exportation to other countries, chiefly in our own bottoms, whereby our navigation is increased, as well as a commercial intercourse with nations which formerly took no India products from England. The balance of our India commerce is, by these means, considerably in our favour, though our imports exceed our exports to that country. It is pretended likewise, "that they avoid making discoveries, or extending their trade to the northward of Churchill." My answer is, why should they employ their ships and seamen in attempts equally dangerous and uncertain, while they have full employment for them, which is alike beneficial to the company and to the nation? In short, every objection to such companies, tried by the true principles of commerce, falls to the ground. As to complaints of misconduct in the administration of the company's concerns, these ought to be adjusted amongst themselves, if they do not affect the general interest which the nation has in the prosperity of the company; when they do, we find government interposes.

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The popular argument against all monopolies is of a political nature, and is the last we have to encounter. It must be considered at large, because it equally affects all limitations and restrictions in the operations of domestic trade; for, if chartered companies, enjoying exclusive privileges, are monopolies, so likewise are all corporations, and every obstruction which prevents any subject from exercising freely his trade or art, in any part of the dominions of Great Britain. "City and corporation charters," says the author of the *Essay on the Causes of the Decline of our Foreign Trade*, "are injurious monopolies. Where freemen exclude by charter any of the same trade from settling in their towns, have they not a monopoly against the rest of the inhabitants? Cannot they impose extravagant prices for their goods on their customers; and do they not do it? If a journeyman, not being a freeman, gets into work in a city or town-corporate, what an outcry is there not made of a foreigner being come in among them, to eat the bread out of their mouths? How! can a free-born Briton be reckoned a foreigner in any part of his own country? What an absurdity is here! yet nevertheless it is true in effect."

We see plainly, by this author's reasoning, that the same pretence is set up for dissolving all corporations, and all private livery companies, as for annulling the charters of our public com-

mercial companies. Individuals, born long after these have been established and brought to perfection, want to enjoy all the advantages of the institutions, without having run any hazard, or put themselves to any extraordinary expences, to entitle them to their profits. And, with the same justice, every workman, or tradesman, who thinks proper to supplant a denizen in any corporate town, is to enjoy the same privileges as the denizen himself, who has paid a valuable consideration, and submitted to seven years servitude to acquire them. The corporation likewise, as a body, may have imposed fines on their members for public buildings, for navigable canals, for quays, and a variety of other conveniencies to carry on their trade; yet an extravagant, idle fellow, who could not succeed in any particular town, or perhaps has fled from it for debt, is to come and settle amongst the denizens of another corporate town, and enjoy all the rights, immunities, and conveniencies, which they and their ancestors have purchased or acquired by painful servitude: and on the sole plea, that they are free-born Britons. But let us suppose that these advocates for the general freedom of trade could carry their point, must it not be obvious to the meanest capacity, that arts, manufactures, and trade would be thrown into the utmost confusion and disorder? Whenever higher wages, a larger demand for goods, or more beneficial employment

ment offered, workmen and tradesmen would leave the places of their nativity, and a general circulating migration would take place; so that no master could be sure of his servant in any manufactory or shop for six months together, nor any landlord of his tenant, if a trader. Besides, it is not considered, that the honours of magistracy vested in corporations is a spur to emulative industry, and these are founded on constant long residence on one spot. In short, the train of evils, which would arise from adopting the false maxim of permitting every individual to employ his industry and abilities in the manner he judges most conducive to his welfare, and to pursue the benefits of trade wherever he can find them, are innumerable; and the only rational answer we can give to such idle claims is, that they are inconsistent with the public good, and cannot be admitted in civilized states.

Pretensions of this nature mean to give the same latitude with respect to commerce, as natural liberty assumes, when opposed to civil liberty, politically considered.

But let it be remembered, that, as the man who submits to the laws of civil society, sacrifices, for the public good, part of his natural liberty; so, in commerce, it is apparent, that the natural freedom of trade, claimed by individuals, must give way to the security, convenience, and advantage of the great mercantile society of which he is a member.

On the principle of a free, open, unlimited exercise of trade, domestic and foreign, all public companies, enjoying exclusive privileges, and all incorporated towns and cities, as well as every restrictive subordination in trade, must fall to the ground; but I imagine the experience of ages, the present flourishing situation of our inland trade, and universal commerce, under these several limitations; and the arguments I have advanced in their favour, will be sufficient to convince the unprejudiced, that public commercial companies and corporations are beneficial, equitable, honourable, and compatible with the freedom of the British constitution.

But who would believe, that we have authors of repute, who have contested another principle of commerce? “the establishment of colonies; or settlements in remote countries;” yet such there are, and therefore it is my duty to obviate all objections on that head.

## LECTURE VII.

## ON COLONIES.

I HAVE shewn in a former part of these Lectures, that planting colonies is a true principle of commerce; that it was carried into execution by the ancient commercial states, and was adopted with success by England in the reign of queen Elizabeth. I mentioned, that the encouragement given by that wise princess to colonization, was the basis of the present power, extensive commerce, and unrivaled navigation of Great Britain.

But in this place, I mean to shew that they are an inexhaustible fund of riches and strength to the British isles, and that, from a little kingdom of renown only for valour and freedom in former times, they have enlarged and consolidated them into a mighty empire.

The French writers unanimously agree, that our naval and commercial superiority is principally derived from our colonies. The author of the comparison between the two kingdoms acknowledges, that in this respect, the two nations are unequal; for the English settlements,  
he



he says, are of greater importance than those of France, and form indeed the chief pillar of England's greatness.

Yet notwithstanding these, and numerous other concurrent testimonies, in support of our principle, and the successful application of it by the British legislature ; early and warm oppositions to it were set on foot soon after our first settlements were made in America ; and, although we have with our usual national spirit and industry, improved in our practice upon this ancient principle of commerce, it is found fault with to this very hour, from the press, and in the senate. Indeed, the contest was carried so far, that, in 1766, administration itself caught the infection, and adopted a scheme of unnatural oppression, which being unhappily enforced, brought on a civil war between the thirteen American Provinces, and the mother-country ; that ended in their acknowledged independence ; and the establishment of a republican government, now known by the style and title of the United States of America.

The principal argument of any weight against colonization is stated by Child, and after him by Cary. “ Gentlemen of no mean capacities, “ amongst whom were Sir William Petty, were “ of opinion, in king William's reign, that the “ New England settlers should be invited to re- “ turn home ; because home population was con- “ sidered

“ sidered as the true national object, and the  
“ depopulation of the kingdom by emigrations  
“ to America was reckoned very prejudicial.”  
Cary takes notice, “ That it has been a great  
“ question among many thoughtful men, whe-  
“ ther the settling our plantations abroad has  
“ been an advantage to the nation ? The reasons  
“ they give against them are, that they have  
“ drained us of multitudes of our people, who  
“ might have been serviceable at home, and ad-  
“ vanced improvement in husbandry and manu-  
“ factures ; that this kingdom is worse peopled,  
“ by so much as they are increased ; and that  
“ inhabitants being the wealth of a nation, by  
“ how much they are lessened, by so much we  
“ are the poorer than when we first began to  
“ settle those colonies.” To these complainants  
of former times, we may add some writers in  
the present, who declare, that, with regard to  
North America, we have been colonizing mad,  
the quick peopling of that continent having  
been made too much our object ; and, in the late  
unhappy divisions between some of these colonies  
and the mother-country, many gentlemen in  
parliament went so far as to wish them at the  
bottom of the sea, or in the hands of any other  
power, France excepted.

It was said, that the expences of maintaining  
the American settlements in time of peace, and of  
defending them from our enemies in time of war,  
were so great, that all the commercial benefits

we

we derived from them were hardly sufficient to indemnify us ; and even those benefits, we are told, became every day more and more precarious, because these colonies began to feel their own strength, and to discover an inclination for independence. Time and nature, it was thought by some, would too soon render them superior to our controul ; and, in support of this alarming notion of their assuming an independent state, that celebrated political writer Mr. Trenchard was quoted, who, it seems, made a jest of the supposition, that they would continue longer dependent on us than necessity compelled them to be, for no other reason than because their grandmothers and ours had been formerly acquainted. Others maintained, that though they were divided by rival interests, and discordant religious principles, they would always unite when the mother-country furnished them a fair opportunity to complain of oppression ; and, in short, that every thing was to be dreaded from their increased population, and skill in agriculture, arts, and manufactures.

That I may not omit any of the apprehensions of mercantile people, who have taken pains with the subject, I must close this summary of the objections to our American settlements with those which the author of the comparison between the importance of the British dominions in India and in America has advanced, in order  
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to prejudice the mother-country in favour of her India commerce, and her territorial acquisitions there, and to excite her to set much less value than she had hitherto done on her dominions in America. I am the more disposed to be thus impartial, because I think it would have been unfair not to have mentioned the arguments of this unknown writer, whose opinions had too much weight in parliament, and in the king's councils; and, amongst other causes, produced the fatal American war.

“ The natural necessity and utility of commerce arises from the difference of production in the two trading countries. And, from this cause, the productions of India, whether of nature or art, being altogether different from those of Britain, it follows, that the articles of commerce which India receives at present from Britain can never cease to be necessary to India: and, through the same cause, those articles which Britain receives from India will ever continue to be useful and necessary to Britain; of consequence, the commercial interests of this dependent dominion can never possibly clash with those of the sovereign; on the contrary, they must ever contribute highly to her benefit.

“ Whereas America differeth but little from Britain in either climate or soil, her natural productions are therefore nearly the same; so  
“ that

“ that she possesseth the rough materials of  
“ almost all the manufactures of Britain; and her  
“ intimate connection with the mother-country  
“ affords her the opportunity of minutely ac-  
“ quainting herself with the art of manufactur-  
“ ing those materials. From whence it is evi-  
“ dent, that almost all the articles of commerce  
“ which America hath hitherto received from  
“ Britain are no farther necessary to her, than  
“ as they are rendered so, by either the want of  
“ hands to carry on those manufactures, or by  
“ the laws of the sovereign restraining her from  
“ the free exercise of certain arts. But the  
“ population of America proceeds with a rapid  
“ speed, and that will of course remove the first  
“ impediment to her supplying herself, even the  
“ want of hands to manufacture. This popu-  
“ lation will at the same time increase the  
“ importance of America; and in proportion as  
“ this importance advances, so will the free  
“ exercise of every art extend, through the di-  
“ minution of the sovereign’s restraining power.  
“ Here is then sufficient ground to apprehend,  
“ that the several articles of commerce which  
“ America receives at present from Britain will  
“ not only soon cease to be necessary to America;  
“ but that she will also have it in her power, and  
“ we cannot doubt her inclination, to rival  
“ the trade of her mother-country with other  
“ nations, in those identical articles.”



I have before observed, that the earliest and the strongest objection to our American settlements was the draining the mother-country of her people; and as their increasing population is made the basis of the apprehensions that they will rival us in manufactures, it is my chief duty and concern to set aside this groundless objection.

In the first place, it is a maxim, “ That the  
“ wealth of a nation consists in the number of  
“ its inhabitants.” But if those inhabitants are not properly classed, and if the populousness of a nation is not found in the classes of industrious, useful, labouring hands, no wealth can accrue to the state merely from numbers. Secondly, it will be found, that the people who have been occasionally sent to some of our colonies, and others, who have from time to time made voluntary emigrations to them, were not of those classes of inhabitants, whose numbers, by their useful employment, form the wealth of the kingdom of Great Britain. And it will farther appear, that if we had not possessed foreign plantations for emigrants of a better description, to reside in, some of them could not, and others would not have remained at home; so that we should have lost so many subjects without resource, by their flying to the dominions of foreign princes. To illustrate the truth of these assertions, I must remind you of one of the true principles of commerce; “ Toleration in mat-

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“ters of religious opinion, generally styled  
“religious liberty.” The intolerant spirit of  
bigoted churchmen, which corrupted admini-  
stration, and destroyed one part of the freedom  
of the British constitution, it is well known,  
drove away great numbers of the subjects of  
England, in the reigns of James I. Charles I. and  
James II. and happy it was for this nation, that  
the distressed wanderers still entertained a natural  
affection for their native country, and were  
desirous rather of cultivating barren deserts,  
under the dominion of the crown of Great  
Britain, provided they could enjoy the civil and  
religious rights of the British constitution, than  
to resort to the most fertile territories of other  
powers. They cultivated the wilds of America,  
and settled the colony of New England, where  
they soon verified, by their industry, that most  
excellent observation of Montesquieu, “that  
“countries are not cultivated in proportion to  
“their fertility, but to their civil and religious  
“liberty.”

Let us now turn our thoughts to the subjects  
who peopled Virginia and Barbadoes. These at  
first were a loose vagrant people, vicious, and  
destitute of means to live at home, who had so  
debilitated themselves by debauchery, or lost  
their reputation by misbehaviour, that no one  
would employ them. Such as these, the mer-  
chants by their agents, and the masters of vessels  
by

by their emissaries, (called at that time Spirits), picked up in the streets of London, Bristol, and other seaports, and cloathed and transported them, to be employed in these plantations ; and afterwards, it was for a long course of years, the impolitic custom to transport felons to these islands, and to Jamaica. Swarms of inhabitants of this sort, could never enrich a free country, where they cannot be made slaves, even though they have justly forfeited their liberties by theft, nor could most of them have remained with us. As to the emigrations of unfortunate men flying for debt, it is certainly much better that they should have British colonies to inhabit, than that they should carry away their arts and industry, and perhaps a private purse, to Dunkirk, or any other French or Dutch asylum.

But another great cause of emigration from Great Britain to the last-mentioned settlements, was, the revolutions in the circumstances and situations of people of property during the civil wars, and at the restoration. Individuals of both parties, when they lost their honours, or estates, or were in danger of persecution, repaired to those plantations, which very soon peopled and improved them ; for many families carried over considerable effects.

It has now I believe, been demonstrated to your satisfaction, that the colonies did not formerly drain us of such inhabitants as enrich a

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country ;

country ; but it will be said, what have they done of late years, and what are they now doing ? Most undoubtedly they are annually depriving you of useful inhabitants. But this is not their fault ; it is the consequence of the various discouragements I have stated at large under the head of population ; and again I repeat it, they had much better resort to our colonies, and there in some measure still remain in a degree useful to us, by consuming our manufactures sent to the colonies, and by raising the materials for them to be sent home, than fly to France or Germany. However, it will be found upon the whole, that the numbers of useful hands who go to America, are not so considerable as it is generally imagined, and they would be greatly lessened, if the proper means were taken to lower the price of provisions, and to give greater encouragement to them at home.

The late Dr. Franklin, in his observations concerning the increase of mankind, acknowledges the rapidity with which our American colonies have been peopled, and says, that, in a little time, they will take off every thing we make that suits their consumption. But he adds, that notwithstanding this increase, so vast is the territory of North America, that it will require many ages to settle it fully ; and till it is fully settled, labour will never be cheap there, where no man continues long a labourer for others, but gets a plantation

tation of his own ; no man continues long a journeyman to a trade, but goes among the new settlers, and sets up for himself. It follows from this, that labour cannot be cheap enough for some centuries, to enable the present government to establish manufactures there. This opinion is corroborated by Mr. Jefferson of Virginia (a competitor with Mr. Adams, to succeed General Washington as President of the United States). “ It is,” says this enlightened politician, “ for the interest of the American States, that for a long time their manufacturers should reside in Europe.”

Our apprehensions therefore, that they will become manufacturers to such a degree as to diminish considerably their consumption of the manufactures of Great Britain, and in the end be enabled to do without them, are groundless, and this objection to our colonies partly answered. Yet it must be owned, that extreme oppression may drive whole societies, as well as individuals, to acts of desperation ; but it is the interest, and we know it is the inclination of our most gracious Sovereign, to prevent them in future, if any unthinking or tyrannic minister shall hereafter propose measures which have a tendency to force them to forsake their true interest, which is the clearing and cultivating the vast quantities of land lying waste in their different soils and climates, so as to make them produce every rough material

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material for our manufactures, every naval store, and in fine, every other commodity we find ourselves necessitated to purchase on exorbitant terms, from foreign countries. If all or most of these can be produced in our settlements, and paid for with our manufactures, it must surely be the height of folly, or of blind prejudice and partiality, not to give the colonists all possible encouragement to convert their uncultivated lands, to mines of commercial treasure.

The more we consider the value of the imports we do, and may hereafter make from our foreign colonies, of necessary articles for home-consumption and re-exportation, some of which articles we formerly imported, and others we must continue to import from foreign countries, till our colonies can supply them, the more clearly we must be convinced of their commercial value. It is granted that the climate and soil is nearly the same in some parts of America; but in others, this is not the case; and the articles she is capable of producing for the service of this country, actually differ very widely from the product of the soil of Britain; but admitting they are generally similar, it is well known that the small extent of the British isles could never produce a sufficient quantity of raw silk, hemp, flax, iron, naval stores, &c. for her consumption. If therefore any of the colonies can supply a deficiency which used to be made good by foreign countries,

countries, by which our manufactures (particularly the linen) were often at their mercy, he must be void of all commercial knowledge, who will not allow that our commerce with those parts of America, and with new settlements in parts beyond the seas, is highly beneficial to the general commerce of Great Britain. For if such settlements are profitably employed in raising and exporting to Great Britain, commodities that we cannot raise, nor procure on such beneficial terms elsewhere, it follows naturally, that they will not attempt to disuse our manufactures, and that the intercourse, founded on the true commercial principle of gain on both sides, must be durable.

That they possess the rough materials of our manufactures is very true, and that they have frequent opportunities of learning our manufacturing arts; but we may always act so prudently and politically as to prevent their inclination to make use of the knowledge they acquire, by employing them more to their advantage. Government at home may likewise interpose, and stop the exportation of tools, and the emigration of its useful hands, if it is found that we lose any great number of the latter; but it cannot go any further; nor does there appear to be any occasion at present to make new laws for that purpose; enforcing those already subsisting will be sufficient, if the evil gets to any height.



Colonies are to be considered as large provinces or districts of an extensive empire ; they are members of the same body ; they are dependencies on one supreme government ; and they ought to have but one joint interest in common with the great political head from which they derive their existence.

Factories are establishments of a different nature. In general, they are neither founded on dominion, nor on such legal right as will not admit of dispute. They often depend on treaties of commerce, and sometimes on the arbitrary will of the sovereign, who permits them in his dominions. Factories therefore must depend on a secondary principle for success. This is not the case with respect to colonies.

Treaties of commerce have already been noticed, as forming one part of our commercial institutes ; but while the faith of princes depends only on their want of power to violate these treaties, and that as soon as they are able, they plead the modern principle of political necessity, or of existing circumstances, as an excuse for setting them aside ; all the immediate advantages derived from any factories, however great or opulent, (though they may overbalance the profits of colonies for any short period of time), will not entitle them to be considered in an equal point of view.

It cannot be denied, that the benefits derived from factories in countries where we have no commercial

commercial treaties, to secure the lives and property of our factors, or to entitle them to certain privileges and immunities necessary for their welfare, must be highly precarious, and not to be depended on for any number of years.

I am very ready to admit that our East India settlements have at present assumed a rank and title far beyond that of factories. Our late territorial acquisition, and the fall of Tippoo Sultaun, having secured to the imperial crown of Great Britain such extensive domains, that they are with great propriety denominated, “The British dominions in India.” But at the time when the author of the comparison published his pernicious treatise, I was warranted to consider them as factories, subject to the fortune of war; and which we had often been in danger of losing; particularly in the year 1756, when the French seized on the most considerable factories of the British East India Company on the coast of Coromandel; and Surajah Dowla, Nabob of Bengal, and a cruel tyrant, instigated by our enemies, to extirpate the English factories, took Calcutta, acted the horrid tragedy of the black-hole, sent pioneers to raze Calcutta to the ground; and wrote to the governor of Madras, “that no English subject should for the future presume to settle within his territory of Bengal.”

The following year, the late Lord Clive by land, and Admiral Watson by sea, aided by the

the land forces under the command of another brave British officer, laid siege to Calcutta, recovered it, and compelled the tyrant to make concessions highly honourable and advantageous to the East India Company. But like Tippoo, who in this instance followed his example, he soon violated the treaty he had made, by oppressing the British factors, and making preparations for a fresh perfidious attack on their settlements. To avert this blow, the company's servants were obliged to countenance and support a conspiracy formed against him by his prime-minister Jaffier Aly Khan. The well-concerted plan succeeded; Surajah Dowla was deposed, Jaffier was proclaimed Nabob of Bengal, aided by the arms and influence of Lord Clive; and the murderer of the English at Calcutta met the fate he so justly deserved, being put to death by his successor.

In 1759, the Dutch factory menaced the newly acquired dominions of the English in Bengal, and Aly Khan, though indebted to the English for his elevation, was suspected to be secretly in their interest. However, by the vigilance and activity of Lord Clive, then resident at Calcutta, the Dutch armament which attempted to go up the river of Bengal to their settlement at Chinchura, and the land forces already debarked, were totally defeated, and the settlement destroyed.

In 1761, another disturbance was attempted by a prince of the ancient Mogul empire in the  
interest

interest of the French, which likewise miscarried.

Finally, we are but just recovered from the alarm, which the landing and conquests of Buonaparte in Egypt had spread through the same dominions in India, which obliged government to send a powerful fleet to support our allies the Turks, in frustrating the designs of this new enemy. The glorious victory of Lord Nelson of the Nile, and the applauses bestowed by his grateful countrymen on their gallant hero, just returned home, occupied the mind of your Lecturer, at the moment of sending this portion of his labours to the press.

After this brief review of the variable situation of public affairs in India, during nearly one half of the last century, I do not hesitate to declare, that in my humble opinion, great as our resources are from the East Indian dominion, neither that dominion nor the company's establishment at home, can be considered in any other light, than as a secondary cause of our national prosperity. Whereas, our remaining colonies in America, our commercial connexions with the united states of that country, and our other settlements in different quarters, are the prime sources of our maritime power, extensive commerce, and general prosperity.

## LECTURE VIII.

## ON ASSURANCE, OR INSURANCE.

THE principle of insurance is one of the most beneficial that could possibly be introduced into universal commerce, and it is one of the chief causes of the prosperity of every maritime state.

As I shall studiously avoid tedious dissertations, which are foreign to the title of my work, my readers must not expect to find in this place, either the laws of insurance, or of avaries, &c. ; subjects in themselves, so important and delicate, that they require volumes to illustrate them ; but that I may not leave those, whom a general thirst after useful knowledge, or interest may prompt to investigate them, without guides, I refer them, with great satisfaction, to two most excellent English authors, whose performances do honour to their country\*.

\* Wesket on Insurance, one vol. folio. *Lex Mercatoria Rediviva*, folio, by Wyndham Beauwes, formerly British Consul at Seville. 5th Edition carefully revised and improved by me, London, 1791.

Having discharged this duty, I shall now demonstrate the great advantages derived from the principle of insurance to commerce in general, and refute some erroneous notions concerning it, which ignorant people have propagated, with a view of bringing it into discredit.

Every person the least conversant in maritime affairs, must be sensible of the great peril of navigation; and those who understand geography need not be told, that some voyages are more dangerous than others. But even if we could suppose the subjects of this commercial country ignorant of the principles of geography and navigation, the common newspapers are but too faithful monitors of the hazard attending adventures by sea. So general is this subject, that there is scarce a family in Great Britain, high or low, but what has, or may have, some occasion to experience the great perils of the ocean.

To obviate the fatal effects of the various accidents to which voyages by sea are liable, is the business of insurance; and the æra in which insurance was fixed on such a creditable and advantageous footing, as to make it a profitable branch of business, by which means it became general, may properly be stiled the epoch of the resurrection of commerce in England. I need only remind you, that you owe the activity of this principle to the wise administration of queen Elizabeth.

It



It will require no great depth of judgment to perceive, that before the practice of insurance became general, and was established on a secure basis, commerce must have been extremely limited and confined, from the natural dread of the perils of the sea. The loss of a ship richly laden was sufficient to ruin a capital house, and to reduce merchants of the first rank from affluence to mendicity.

Yet, to maintain the respectable character and figure in life of an English merchant, it was necessary to run the greatest risks : to adventure but little, to be only part owner of a valuable cargo, could never support a family, whose head was either invested with the dignity of magistracy, or the honour of a seat in parliament ; the more bold and insensible, therefore, adventured largely ; but as the timid and cautious will always be the majority in the mercantile world, the progress of commerce was slow, and (making allowance for great losses) very often inadequate to the expences of carrying it on. A commercial undertaking was often set on foot by private associations of merchants, and conducted for some time with proper spirit and vigour ; but suddenly the loss or capture of an homeward-bound ship or two, dissolved the association, injured the most opulent among the adventurers so much, that they were either disheartened, or disabled to engage in a second enterprize, and  
totally

totally ruined the less wealthy partners in the scheme.

While commerce was, by means of the double danger of storms and of enemies, reduced to a languishing condition, a phoenix sprung from her expiring flame. Necessity gave birth to insurance, as it had been the parent of mercantile companies.

To give new powers to commerce, by means of a common fund and joint interest, was the object of companies.

To secure these powers from declination or diminution, and thus to render the joint interest permanent, was the design of insurance.

But it has been objected, that the premiums for insurance have raised the price of manufactures, and have been one cause of making them too dear for foreign markets.

This proposition I strenuously deny; because it appears very evident to me, that before insurance was generally known and encouraged, manufactures and merchandize of every denomination were exported and imported on worse terms than at present, for the following reasons:

The merchant-adventurer set a value on them proportioned to the risk he conceived he run in the voyage. The ship's husband, or owner, set an higher price on the freight, having no other indemnification for the peril of his ship. The captain or master, and the seamen, followed the  
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same rule, with respect to wages ; in proportion to the hazard of their lives, they very equitably rated their demands.

If therefore we estimate the probable amount of all these charges on commodities sent to, or received from foreign countries, which depended on no certain rules of calculation, we cannot hesitate a moment to affirm, that insurance has not enhanced the price of merchandize either inwards or outwards. On the contrary, in my humble opinion, we must have exported our native commodities much cheaper since the universal practice of insurance, than before ; for the premium paid by the merchant for insurance of his cargo, or by the owner for his ship, bears no proportion to the additional price which the one put upon his merchandize, and the other on his bottom, as a counterbalance against the perils of the sea.

Those who object to exclusive commercial companies must be strong advocates for insurance ; for when we consider how very few private individuals are in a condition to undertake any great commercial enterprises, (and without a number of very great ones, this nation could not support its power and dignity), the advantages of insurance, which enables even a private adventurer to risk his all at sea, stand confessed.

There is another circumstance in favour of the insured, which I cannot pass over in silence.

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The insurers are subject to a variety of frauds and impositions from all the parties concerned on the side of the insured, such as the captain and his crew; whereas the insurer stands alone, relies on the good faith of the contractors with him, and can neither elude nor alter the force of his signature. We but seldom hear of an action at law brought against insurers; but we have frequent instances of the roguery of persons insured, and of contests respecting avaries. But a code, to be stiled, The Law of Merchants, if properly compiled, would prevent many of these, and if a council of commerce was established in every capital town in this kingdom, to decide commercial disputes.

Our principle being incontrovertible, we will proceed to answer another objection to part of the practice, as it is followed in England.

The insurance of lives is prohibited by law in France and Holland, but with us the custom of insuring embraces every object, without exception. This practice is exclaimed against by all foreign writers; and some of our own people have very idly found fault with it.

On the very same principle that the owner is enabled to lower the freight, and the merchant his commodities, by the indemnification which removes the risk of the voyage; the master and the officers (for it seldom descends to the common men) may undertake a perilous expedition, when  
6 they

they can insure a certain sum on their lives, for the benefit of their families, if they have the misfortune to be lost.

It is reckoned sound policy in France and Holland, not to permit the master or owner to insure to the utmost value of the ship, because it throws a temptation in the way of the owner and the master jointly, or of the latter separately, to sink the ship wilfully. This argument seems very rational; and, after the many instances we have had in England, of the fraudulent destruction of vessels, it is surprizing to find, that owners and masters are still suffered to insure above the value of the bottom.

A schooner entered the port of Ostend in the spring of 1768, whose master was a native of Gibraltar; and upon information given me under oath, that this man had formerly fled from London to Dunkirk, to avoid a prosecution in the admiralty court, on suspicion of having sunk a ship he commanded at that time, I determined to visit the vessel of which he was now master and sole owner. Six British masters accompanied me, who found her to be French-built, declared her to be a coffin, and added, that she was only fit to sink. On further enquiry I found, that he had bought her at Dunkirk for two hundred and fifty pounds, and insured her at London for five hundred pounds. These impositions being so common, one would imagine insurers would  
take

take more care to have the bottoms they insure properly surveyed. The owner ought always to run the risk of one tenth of the value, to prevent frauds.

It has been the subject of great contests in the mercantile world, Whether it is right to insure an enemy's ships and merchandize, in time of war?

Those who plead for the affirmative pretend, that it is idle to make laws to prevent a transaction which may be carried on by means of a written correspondence ; and that, even if such prohibitions could put a stop to the practice, it would be highly impolitic to lay such a restraint on the commerce of insurance, which produces a certain profit.

But, in answer to this, I must beg leave to observe, that the practice gives the enemy all the advantages of the principle of insurance, and defeats the first principle of war, with respect to the insurers.

If commerce is the source of maritime power, and it is the first principle of war to weaken and destroy that power in your enemies, undoubtedly you are guilty of the greatest possible folly and madness, if you render the commerce of your enemy secure, and give her new sources of maritime power. Besides, if money is the soul of war, it may be more advantageous to your enemy to be paid ready money for ship and cargo,

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when



when taken, by means of insurance, than to wait the slow remittances of the merchants to whom the cargo was consigned, had it arrived in safety.

Supposing your insurers to be considerable gainers, you must be sensible this must be a branch of commerce conducted on false principles; for individuals would gain, while the nation suffered by having the hands of her enemy strengthened.

But if the naval power of the insurers is superior to that of the insured, it is most likely that the insurers would lose by this illicit commerce with the enemy; and thus what the superior naval strength of our country gained on the one side, would be thrown away by the merchant-insurers on the other. Upon the whole therefore, we must highly approve the act of the British parliament, made during the war of 1744, to prevent insuring the enemy's ships and merchandise.

It should be an invariable maxim to carry on the business of insurance by incorporated companies, known to have a certain considerable joint fund, sufficient to enable them to answer the demands that may be made on them for extraordinary, as well as ordinary losses. We have two such companies in London, the Royal Exchange, and the London Assurance, which were incorporated by statute of 6 Geo. I. c. 18. and each of them raised the sum of 1,500,000*l.* by the

the sale of shares, which, together with the profits made by these corporations since, independent of the dividends they have made to the proprietors, form a secure and adequate capital, on which those who insure with these companies may firmly rely. But as the law of the land does not prevent private insurers from underwriting sums to any amount, I think it a duty I owe the public, to assign my reasons for giving the preference to public companies.

Private underwriters of policies of insurance are for the most part men of the first reputation and fortunes in the city of London; but they are most commonly merchants, and as such liable to the various accidents attendant on commercial transactions, which, notwithstanding all the precaution and foresight of human wisdom, will sometimes miscarry. Indeed it very seldom happens that underwriters fail; but if we could produce only one instance since the year 1720, when these companies were established, it would be sufficient to justify my recommending insurance with companies, in preference to private insurance; but, unfortunately for the insured, if it were necessary, I could produce two in every year, upon an average, which, in the space of fifty years, makes one hundred failures of private insurers.

The principle on which insurance turns is, the absolute security of every commercial adventurer

by sea. Now, nothing can be more absurd, than for a man to pay a premium to assure him from the consequences of the dangers of the sea, and afterwards to have that security fail him.

Though it is not to be expected in human affairs, that an impossibility of breaking a contract should make part of its conditions, yet, in the business of insurance, I presume to say, that it ought to exceed the bounds of probability. Let not therefore the most respectable merchant consider this maxim in an unfavourable light; the author looks up with veneration to the character of a reputable British merchant; but truth knows no distinction of persons or rank, when her sacred oracles are to be put in one scale, and the highest degree of human credit, or dignity, in the other.

Exchanges, public credit, circulation of money, and banks, would follow next in the order of our Elements of Commerce; but these I must necessarily incorporate into the Elements of Finances to avoid tautology and prolixity.

Having therefore closed the general elements of commerce, I shall proceed to give a sketch of the true balance of trade; after which I shall treat of the administration of commerce separately, and then conclude this division of my work with the outlines of the education, accomplishments, and character of a British merchant.

## LECTURE IX.

## ON THE BALANCE OF COMMERCE.

I KNOW not any subject upon which commercial writers have bestowed so much pains to so little purpose.

The earliest author of any note on this intricate point is Sir Josiah Child, from whom I think it necessary to quote the following observations.

“ The balance of trade is commonly understood two ways. First, generally, Something whereby it may be known whether this kingdom gaineth or loseth by foreign trade. Secondly, particularly, Something whereby we may know by what trades the kingdom gains, and by what it loseth.

“ For the first of these, it is the most general received opinion, and that not ill grounded, that this balance is to be taken by a strict scrutiny of what proportion the value of the commodities exported out of the kingdom bear to those imported; and if the exports

“ exceed the imports, it is concluded the nation  
“ gets by the general course of its trade, it  
“ being supposed that the overplus is imported  
“ in bullion, and so adds to the treasure of this  
“ kingdom; gold and silver being taken for the  
“ measure and standard of riches.”

Both Child and Cary recommend the custom-house books as the only method of ascertaining this surplus value of the exports; yet they agree in acknowledging the fallacy of the custom-house entries, and the utter impossibility of getting at the amount of the contraband trade, or smuggling, which ought however to be taken into the general balance. Cary likewise, falls into the old error of reckoning the balance of trade by the increase of bullion. Mun is another writer who recommends a reference to the custom-house books, as a means of striking this balance. But, notwithstanding all our care and attention, it will be found extremely difficult, if not impossible, to obtain a true account both with respect to quantity and value of the merchandize exported from, and imported into Great Britain, for the following reasons.

I. Because many goods are over-rated outwards, and under-rated inwards.

II. On account of surplus-entries, some merchants entering double what they intend to ship off, to blind and prevent others from sending the like commodities to the same market.

III. Because

III. Because prodigious quantities of fine commodities, which are not bulky, are clandestinely imported to a considerable amount, and Flanders fine lace is permitted to come by the post.

IV. Because neither the profits we make by the freight of our ships, nor the rates for which our manufactures are sold abroad, nor the produce of our colonies, re-exported from home to foreigners, are to be found in the custom-house books, or to be got at by any other means.

V. Because we have no general account of accidents that diminish the stock sent out; such as losses by sea, bad markets, foreign bankruptcies, confiscations, and captures in time of war.

But we have another difficulty still to encounter on the subject of striking a general balance of commerce.

I deny the truth of the maxim advanced by all these authors, and affirm, that the rule they give us for judging of the balance is false.

Neither the surplus value of the exports to the imports, nor yet the increase of bullion, are the true criterions by which we are to determine that the general balance is in our favour. On the contrary, the imports for seven years successively may be to a much greater amount than the exports; and the quantity of bullion, nay, of coin, may have kept diminishing, all this time, and



yet the general balance of commerce may have been every year, in our favour.

This is my hypothesis; it is new, and may appear singular; but I hope it will not be found the less true, and I mean to prove it to your satisfaction.

We will now suppose, that, from the year 1789 to 1799, we continued importing quantities of naval stores to be laid up in the dock-yards, or for immediate use, which made the general balance of the amount of the imports exceed considerably the amount of all our exports, and that some of our bullion had been sent out to pay the balance, which had likewise diminished that; upon this state of the case, according to our authors, the balance of trade would have been against us for ten years. But, according to my system, it would have been considerably in our favour, by our having an improvable stock in hand of the most valuable articles for the service of our fleets on the most advantageous terms, which otherwise, on the emergency of a war, must have been purchased on the most disadvantageous terms. I apprehend therefore, that the best way to form a rational conjecture, concerning the general balance of commerce, as we cannot bring it to a certainty, is, to deduce it from an investigation of the national benefits we derive specifically from the extensive commerce we carry on with each quarter of the globe.

But

But as such an investigation belongs more properly to POLITICAL ARITHMETIC, and would oblige me to enter into long and intricate details, I prefer advising gentlemen who expect to be employed in public stations, to study attentively, and endeavour to make themselves masters of that useful science.

The result will clearly demonstrate, that the commerce of the British empire is at present, (A. D. 1801,) in the most flourishing condition, and the total balance several millions sterling in our favour. But, at the same time, I must observe, that there are many things to rectify in the internal direction of commercial affairs at home, in order to secure and preserve this prosperity, and to prevent any material reverse, which whenever it happens, sensibly affects the political state of the nation. It will therefore be proper to shew on what principles, the administration of our inland trade and universal commerce should be conducted; and, in doing this, I shall, of course, fulfil a promise made in the preceding pages; for a recapitulation of my subject will be indispensably necessary.

## LECTURE X.

ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF COMMERCIAL  
AFFAIRS.

THOSE celebrated French ministers the Duke of Sully, and Monsieur Colbert; that most excellent French writer, Montesquieu; and the latest British author we have on the subject, Sir James Steuart, all agree in establishing this invariable maxim,

“ That the encouragement of agriculture  
“ should be the first object of the statesman who  
“ has the lead in the administration of the public  
“ concerns of a great commercial people.”

But I have advanced so much already on this subject, under the heads of agriculture and population, that I will not tire your patience with repetitions on the same subjects. On the whole, I believe you are fully convinced that many important regulations and improvements in both, are the only radical means of preventing those dreadful scarcities of corn, and other necessities of life, which have so frequently occurred of late years.

With

With respect to manufactures, the able statesman will have an arduous task to introduce a reform ; for, by endeavouring to proportion the prices of wages to the advantages derived from the labour of the industrious poor, he will raise a hornet's nest about his ears, and will have to combat with mercenary, insolent, and factious masters, who, by half-starving the poor, and afterwards vending their fabrics at an enhanced price above their value, have acquired princely fortunes. To restrain the immoderate consumption of spirituous liquors, and to reform ale-houses throughout the kingdom, is still a more ungrateful task, which for a time cannot fail to irritate a misguided populace, blind to their own interest ; and any diminution in the revenue, occasioned by such a patriotic plan, might shake him out of the seat of power. Yet no man can doubt the necessity of enquiring into the conduct of the master-manufacturers, or of taking some measures to better the condition of their workmen.

But the two principal regulations wanted under this head, and which we cannot dispense with, are, first, the reduction, or taking off the excises on all materials used for our manufactures, or in any respect useful in the conduct of them ; such, for instance, are the excises on soap, candles, leather, &c. Secondly, The taking some method to decrease the number of menial domestic

tic servants, and to throw them back into the manufactories, farms, and villages, that useful population may be increased, without the hazardous expedient of naturalization.

But it will be asked, what minister will be so bold to introduce such innovations, however sensible he may be that they are for the public good? I readily answer, None, unless he is supported by the Crown, and has, at the same time, from his general good character, the confidence of the people. Such a statesman may bring about any beneficial revolution whatever, in the system of political economy.

The statesman who takes the lead in administration, who enjoys the superior confidence of his sovereign, and who means to promote his royal master's glory, and his people's happiness, must absolutely begin with establishing councils of commerce in all the principal cities of the British empire.

The wisest commercial states, both monarchical and republican, set him the example. France, Holland, Germany, Denmark, and some others of less note, have their chambers of commerce.

Sir Josiah Child observes concerning the Dutch, " That they have, in their greatest councils of state and war, trading merchants that have lived abroad in most parts of the world, who have not only the critical knowledge, but the practical experience of commerce, by whom

“ whom laws and orders are contrived, and peaces  
“ with foreign princes projected, to the great  
“ advantage of their trade.” And Cary, a more  
modern writer, recommends it to the consideration of parliament to appoint standing committees of trade, composed of men well versed therein, whose sole business it should be to consider the state thereof, and to find out ways to improve it. He adds, “ Great care must be  
“ taken, that these committees be not filled up  
“ with such who know nothing of the business,  
“ and thereby this excellent institution become  
“ only a matter of form and expence. In the  
“ management of things of much less moment,  
“ we employ such who are supposed to  
“ understand what they undertake. Trade  
“ requires as much policy as matters of state,  
“ and can never be kept in a regular motion by  
“ accident; when the frame of it is out of  
“ order, we know not where to begin to mend  
“ it, for want of a set of experienced builders,  
“ ready to receive applications, and able to  
“ judge where the defect lies.”

If only one council of commerce in this kingdom, and another in each of the American colonies, had subsisted on this plan, we should never have heard of the stamp act, nor of some other acts of parliament still unrepealed, which injured commerce to a very high degree the instant they were made. Such, amongst others,

was



was the act of the ninth and tenth of William III. for the more effectual preventing the importation of bone lace, which caused a prohibition of British woollen cloths (our staple manufacture) in Flanders, and obliged the same parliament, in the next session, to repeal the act conditionally, viz. three months after the prohibition on our cloths should be taken off. This was accordingly done : but, by a subsequent act, the duties on those laces were made so high, that, by way of reprisal, duties were laid on our woollen cloths and stuffs, by the Flemish government, which destroyed above two thirds of this valuable branch of commerce.

In short, as Cary says, “ Parliaments have “ very often made commercial matters worse “ than they found them ;” one reason of which is, that the regulations of trade require more time to look into their distant consequences, than one or two sessions : another is, that the study of the theory of commerce is not made a part of the education of youth, who are likely to become British senators. The late worthy Sir John Bernard used frequently to complain of this in the House of Commons, and to tell our apparently well-bred gentlemen, “ that they “ did not know so much of the matter before “ them (when the subject was commercial) as “ school-boys and young apprentices.”

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The expediency of instituting councils of commerce, needs no further proof; it rests on the best authorities, ancient and modern.

The good effects of such establishments may be deduced from the various duties of their office, which I shall briefly point out; and from hence likewise shall discover the defectiveness of the present system of administration, with respect to commerce.

1. It would be the business of the chambers of commerce, in the several counties of the three united kingdoms, to make reports, every three months at least, of the state of agriculture, population, and manufactures, to the grand councils of commerce at London, Edinburgh, and Dublin. The members of these provincial chambers being elected annually, by the freemen of corporate towns, from the principal traders residing in the respective counties, it would be their interest, as well as their duty, to mark any decline in agriculture, any symptoms of depopulation, any discouragement of manufactures, or any impediment to the general circulation of inland trade. No ingrossing of farms; no razing of cottages; no monopolizing of provisions; no oppressions of the poor working manufacturer, by low wages, in a country where high wages are the proof of riches and commercial prosperity; no combinations of workmen to prescribe illegal conditions to their masters; no

frauds in quantity or quality of the manufactures could remain long unconcealed or unredressed, if such institutions were general, the elections impartial, and the helm of government steered by an honest, discerning statesman.

2. In sea-port towns, these commercial juries would report any visible diminution in the number and tonnage of shipping usually trading to or from each respective port; they would watch over the increase or decrease of those useful subjects, British seamen; they would remonstrate on exorbitant port duties, which frequently occasion a diminution of foreign navigation to our ports; they would petition for redress of the remaining embarrassments in the mode of paying the Custom-house duties; they would notice when any merchandize usually exported to the benefit of the commerce of the empire ceased, and point out the method of restoring it; they would present, as great grievances, all impolitic importations of articles of costly, effeminate luxury, from countries which do not consume any of our native products or manufactures; they would effectually destroy smuggling, by their vigilance and activity in discovering the clandestine importers, the venders, and the fraudulent purchasers; and they would make a proper representation to government of the oppressive excises on materials used in the mechanic arts  
and

and manufactures, which necessarily enhance their value at foreign markets.

3. They would frame a concise, but complete mercantile code, or body of commercial laws, reforming those statutes which were well adapted to the infant state of our trade, but which are by no means suited to the present extensive commerce of Great Britain. This code once digested, approved by the majority of the chambers of commerce throughout the three kingdoms, ratified by the grand council at London, and legalised by act of parliament, would enable the different chambers to exercise a judicial authority, and to terminate mercantile disputes in a summary way, as is practised in France, and other countries.

4. They would most assuredly devise some means of employing the vagrant poor; of obliging the robust to follow a life of honest industry; and of punishing the idle and dissolute, in the first instance, to prevent their becoming criminals, which should be the first object of the police \*.

5. They would alter the mode of satisfaction to be given by insolvent debtors to their creditors; they would not be so absurd as to shut up in prisons, at the will of the latter, a number of useful laborious seamen, mechanics, manufacturers, and tradesmen; most of whom, if not

\* See *Colquhoun's treatise on the Police of the Metropolis.*

all, might be employed in their several branches, partly for the benefit of their creditors, and partly for the support of their families, if a law were enacted to punish the wilful idleness of insolvent debtors ; and to execute them as felons, if they ran away from their usual places of residence and employment, before they had paid a reasonable composition for their debts, in proper portions, from the fruits of their industry or ingenuity.

The confinement of vast numbers of useful hands in prisons for debt, is one of the most inhuman, unmanly, and impolitic steps, that ever disgraced a people asserting a spirit of liberty.

An absolute power is given, in a free country, to one individual over the person of another : in England—the land of freedom !—if he sinks under the weight of this arbitrary power—if he dies—no inquisition is made for his blood. The king was not his creditor, yet he quietly acquiesces in the loss of a subject, who might contribute to agriculture, population, manufactures, trade, navigation, or the defence of the state.

Under many despotic governments (very near us) whose laws we affect to treat with contempt, but whose frivolous manners we idolize, no such tyranny is permitted.

We loudly boast that we hate, detest, abhor the idea of slavery !—Yet is there a greater slave under the canopy of heaven than an English debtor

debtor lying in prison (totally insolvent) at the mercy of his creditor!

All civil governments founded for the happiness of mankind, lay it down as a maxim—

That the interest, convenience, and often, even the ease of individuals, must be sacrificed to the public good: admit this principle; and then, tell me, how the British government can allow the locking up so many useful members of society yearly, for debt.

I take up this subject in a political and commercial light; but as I am sensible numbers will object that credit would be at a stand, and the course of trade impeded, if debtors were not punishable for failures—I must beg leave to observe, that, there are various modes and degrees of punishment, which should always be proportioned (in affairs of property) to the injury done to individuals; but society should have a power of reclaiming its public share of the person of every one of its members; no punishment therefore, to be inflicted by an individual, for an injury (not made a capital crime by law) should extend to depriving the state of the utility of a subject.

6. They would most strenuously recommend an alteration in our criminal laws, more favourable to humanity and to the interests of a commercial nation than those now subsisting.

The taking away so many lives by public executions, though they have been considerably



diminished of late years through the clemency of our gracious Sovereign, is highly impolitic. Where robberies are attended with horrid circumstances, such as breaking open inhabited houses in the dead of night, and spreading terror and alarm through a family, to the endangering of life; the punishment ought to be capital. But in cases of simple theft and robbery, I humbly apprehend, that neither a government professing the Christian religion, nor individuals, are justifiable in taking away the life of a fellow creature, who might live to make restitution to the injured party (which, when property is invaded, is the utmost we have a right to require) and to become a useful amended member of the community.

7. They would advise a law to be enacted, without loss of time, for the establishment of marine societies, in every capital town and seaport in England, not only for the reception of boys, who after having been idle, profligate, abandoned wretches, take to the sea-faring life as their last resource; but for maintaining and educating a certain number from early youth for the sea-service, as well knowing that the strength of the British empire depends on having a sufficient quantity of able seamen always ready to man our fleets, and to navigate merchant-ships, without having recourse to that savage custom of pressing seamen; a custom which degrades  
our

our character as a civilized and polished nation.

And in order that the boys might join practice to theory, they would recommend the encouragement of fisheries on our coasts to the utmost extent.

8. To these chambers of commerce should be referred all memorials of our ministers and consuls abroad, concerning the decline of any branches of commerce carried on from the respective ports in the district of each chamber, to any foreign countries where such officers reside.

A formidable maritime force, ever ready to protect our commerce by sea, in all quarters of the globe, is likewise indispensably necessary; and it is the duty of the rulers of this commercial kingdom to keep such a force always fit for immediate service.

The last grand regulation I shall mention, which might be introduced into trade by an act of the legislature, is, to render book-debts at home, and in our colonies, transferrable in as easy and as expeditious a manner, as Bank annuities. The hint is taken from Sir Josiah Child; and the practical demonstration of its good effects from the states of Venice, Genoa, and Holland, where the transfer of book-debts is in common use and general esteem.

Child's plan for this purpose is very intricate; mine is quite simple: but it will be proper

(before I make it known) to take the opinion of the trading body of the nation on the principle itself—if no objections are made to it, (after my having advanced it in this public manner as a proposition highly beneficial) I pledge myself to produce it, for the benefit of my fellow-citizens, without fee or reward.

I humbly offer, in support of the proposition, the following observations.

Whoever considers seriously the state of commercial credit, will allow, that many a failure happens in this kingdom, owing to a laudable emulation.—Men over-trade themselves—perhaps the nation, as a commercial body, has set the example. For want of remittances from distant countries, a failure ensues—the merchant's effects are seized—sold at an under-value—charged with exorbitant law-expences: the creditors are dissatisfied; the unhappy man is ruined: I am sorry to add—perhaps some competitor, with an over-grown capital, has crushed him—perhaps he has interested himself in the management of his affairs, in the capacity of a creditor, to prevent his ever becoming his rival again, in that part of the world, to which he traded.

Now let us for a moment only suppose, that book-debts were as easily transferred, as Bank annuities; would not this be a noble relief to the merchants, factors, and manufacturers, who are great exporters, and are obliged to wait the

tardy remittances of their correspondents in remote regions; might it not very often preserve the credit of a great trader, who otherwise is lost, by stopping payment, though that circumstance arises from a sinister unforeseen event, such as the loss of an homeward-bound ship, the failure of correspondents, and various other adventitious misfortunes in traffic.

As to our inland trade, it would be still more advantageous—sharpers and spendthrifts would be extremely cautious how they got into tradesmen's books, if they were uncertain to whom their debts might be assigned, and knew, that the demands on them being made to circulate like bank-notes, must be regularly discharged, at the expiration of the term of credit agreed on.

No poor, dependant, tradesman or mechanic, need then be afraid to present his bill (after two, three, or four years credit) to some insolent, high-born debauchee; and receive a rude repulse, attended with menaces!

It being a general custom to transfer book-debts, when the demands of the wholesale dealer came upon the retailer, or the wants of his family obliged him to alienate a debt, no exceptions could be made, no umbrage taken, at a universal practice!

Private credit would by this measure be restored with security—and if any objection is

admissible, it must be to the execution, not to the plan itself.

Permit me to add a few words on behalf of the poor.

A well regulated system of police with respect to the poor, is much wanting.

No less a sum than 3,000,000 l. is annually collected for the relief of the poor; yet the poor are neither maintained nor properly employed. In the streets of our metropolis they swarm, and are a public reproach to the legislation of the kingdom, and to the magistracy of the capital. At five miles from London, they are continually robbing outhouses and gardens; and at lone houses, where there are no men-servants to oppose them, they are insulting to a degree, which strikes terror and astonishment.

The following are the principal causes of this growing evil.

1. The low-bred, interested inhabitants of most parishes, are select vestry-men, and have the lead in parish affairs.

2. Most men (in this free country) consult their own case; and will not be put to any inconvenience to serve the public, if their purses will excuse them: thus the subaltern offices, which regard the peace and good order of society, are turned over to deputies taken from the lees of the people; and liable to act in concert

cert with, instead of vigorously executing the laws against vagrants.

The office of constable particularly, should always be in the hands of a well-educated, sober, substantial citizen—in this case, they would be a check on the ignorance, insolence, and venality of partial justices. According to Dalton, c. 28, “He ought to be of the abler sort of parishioners; and if a very ignorant, or poor person be chosen, he may, by law, be discharged, and an abler person placed in his room.”—A nocturnal visit to any of our watch-houses will convince the curious observer, that drunken beadies of parishes, who make a practice of serving the office, for the abler well informed opulent parishioners, are not the proper officers the law intended to entrust with the peace and security of society.

Is it sufficient for an overseer to give vagrants two or three shillings; or for a justice to sign a pass?—Should not care be taken to punish them, if they do not prosecute their journeys to the respective places where they belong?

Should not they be sent (under the care of a proper officer) to the public hospitals, to be examined by the surgeons, as to the condition of their bodies, that neither improper spectacles may be presented to the eyes of pregnant women in our streets, nor the humane be imposed on by artifice—in a word, that they may be enforced  
to



to honest industry, if they are found to be healthy and able?

What is it causes a want of hands, and evident signs of depopulation in many country places, while, in time of peace, the capital swarms with beggars and thieves? What! but a total neglect of those salutary laws, which were made for the punishment of idleness and debauchery; and our ill judged prejudices, in favour of all English institutions and regulations, to the utter rejection of every wise system of police in neighbouring commercial countries.

So various have been the remedies proposed on this head, which have all failed of success, that I shall not add to them, because I am aware, that the increase of the public revenue depending on the consumption of exciseable liquors, is a manifest cause, of conniving at the profligacy, idleness, and intemperance of the lower classes of the people in and near our capital towns.

“ The balance of our foreign trade, is the rule of our treasure”—there cannot therefore be a more beneficial study in this country, than the commercial art—by skill in which, we may continually increase this balance “ now considerably “ in our favour.”

## CONCLUSION OF THE ELEMENTS OF COMMERCE.

## Sketch of the Education, Accomplishments, and Character of a British Merchant.

THE antiquity of the free profession of a merchant may justly entitle it to claim precedency to nobility of birth, and all hereditary or created dignities conferred on men by emperors or kings; for there were eminent merchants in the world long before there were any nobles or titled gentry. But, in the early ages of commerce, the rank and profession of a merchant was neither so well understood, nor so clearly distinguished from that of simple inland traders, or shop-keepers, as it has been in modern times.

At present, to use the elegant expression of a celebrated commercial writer, the merchant is happily called, “the steward of the kingdom’s stock, by way of commerce with other nations\*.” *None therefore, in Great Britain, can properly be stiled merchants, but such as export her native products and manufactures to foreign*

\* See Mun’s English Treasure by Foreign Trade.

*climes,*

*climes, or import the commodities of different countries into this realm.* To this general acceptance of the word merchant, I shall strictly adhere, that we may not confound the rank and character of the British merchant with that of a wholesale dealer or trader; an error which we may be easily led into, if we consult the common directories, and other printed lists of our citizens, whose idle vanity often prompts them to pay some venal printer, a small annual gratification, to be placed in the first class of citizens, when their actual situation in life entitles them only to the second, perhaps not even to that\*. And it is the more necessary in this place to mention this distinction, because the education required to accomplish the British merchant, is by no means necessary for the second class of citizens—wholesale traders.

The first care of parents and guardians, who design to bring up a youth to be a British merchant, should be, to instil into his tender mind the soundest principles of religion and morality, and a sacred veneration for truth; probity should be the basis of all his juvenile actions; nor should he, even in his sports and pastimes, ever be suffered to forfeit his word, or evade his promise.

The early cultivation of his native language is indispensably necessary, and to be preferred to

\* See the different Annual Directories.

the study of the dead languages. Parents cannot be guilty of a greater folly than to make lads thresh hard at Latin and Greek for ten or twelve years together\*, when perhaps they will not have occasion twice in their lives to speak, read, or write, either of these languages. The learned languages rarely qualify men for any other professions but those of divinity, law, and physic. Besides, when we consider the brevity of human life, and how early men of business appear on the great theatre of the world, it is really amazing, that even four or five years should be allotted to Latin and Greek, which might be so much more beneficially employed, by nine boys out of ten, in acquiring a perfect knowledge of their own copious language, by means of which alone, without any other aid, they might know as much of ancient learning as is necessary to gratify curiosity, or likely to be generally useful; for all the best ancient authors are translated into English; and as to the arts and sciences, the knowledge of them may be acquired by him, who thoroughly understands his maternal tongue, without studying any other, ancient or modern.

It is indeed an opinion blindly received, and swallowed down from age to age, without examination, “that Latin is necessary to acquire the “arts and sciences.”

\* See Mr. Locke, and the Spectators, on Education.

“There

“There is, however, no more connexion between Latin and science, nor between Latin and any one art, than between English and the same art. Will a man who understands Latin run, or wrestle, or dance, or fence, better than if he knew but English? Will a clock-maker, who knows Latin, finish his work with greater accuracy? Will a commander, who has learned Latin, navigate a vessel to the East or West Indies better than one, who speaks English, French, Dutch, or Spanish?”

“The knowledge of things is acquired by thought and attentive observation; and of arts, by practice and experience; and it makes no difference in what language either of them is learned or expressed. The finer arts, music, painting, and architecture, might have been invented at first just as well by one who thought and spoke in English. as by one who thought and spoke in Greek or in Latin. They, as well as other arts and sciences, can be taught to greater advantage in English, than in either of the other two.”

All the great discoveries in natural philosophy, the true system of astronomy, the theory of gravitation, the various improvements in optics and mechanics, are the productions of modern times \*.”

\* See a Plan of an English Grammar-school Education, by James Buchanan. London, printed for E. and C. Dilly. 1770.

The sensible part of Great Britain therefore, who have turned their thoughts upon right education, especially such as have written upon it, are universally of opinion, that it is much wiser to set youth upon a course of education, every part of which is easily attainable, and of real use in public life, than to torture them with the dead languages. And as to a merchant, it is evident he may be perfectly accomplished without the knowledge of them ; but if he thinks proper to study them, let it be at his leisure hours, after he has made himself master of every branch of knowledge requisite for his profession. Should he find himself, by success in commerce, and the favour of his countrymen, likely to become a senator, it will then be time enough for him to sit down and read the Latin prose authors ; and having already attained the elements of languages, he will make more progress in six months, than a boy at school in six years, and fully sufficient to enable him to ornament his speeches with strokes of ancient eloquence, or even to introduce an apposite quotation from the Latin authors. But, as a further proof, that even this knowledge of the Latin tongue is not indispensably necessary, we have only to review the house of commons in the present, or any past parliament, and we shall find, generally speaking, the greatest classical scholars, the best university  
proficients,



proficients, are the silent members, or uneloquent speakers in that house.

The late Mr. Sheridan, in his plan of British education, observes what has been a general complaint : “ That, instead of preparing each youth  
 “ for that sphere of life in which he is afterwards  
 “ to move, all are trained in one and the same  
 “ course, which fits them for no one employment on earth. A smattering in two dead languages is all that is to be gotten by the present method of education, the art of wrangling, some small knowledge in speculative philosophy, and some crude notions of impenetrable metaphysics \*.”

In fine, so necessary is it, in my idea, to undeceive parents and guardians on this subject of the education of youth, not designed for the three learned professions of divinity, law, and physic, and yet so obstinate are the pedantic and self-interested, in recommending the old method of plodding on in Latin and Greek, that I have spared no pains to collate the best authorities in support of my own judgment, and shall conclude the topic with the sanction of one of the most learned, candid, and accomplished gentlemen of the age we live in. His opinion must have double force, when it is considered, that though a perfect master of the Hebrew, Greek, and

\* See British Education, by Thomas Sheridan, A. M. London, printed for R. and J. Dodsley, Pall mall.

Latin languages, he judged it necessary, for the benefit of his country, to sit down and compose an easy, familiar introduction to the English tongue; and to recommend to all persons concerned in the education of British youth, to make a grammatical knowledge of their maternal language, the basis of the study of foreign languages.

“ To enter at once upon the science of grammar, and the study of a foreign language,” says this elegant writer, “ is to encounter two difficulties together, each of which would be much lessened, by being taken separately, and in its proper order. A competent grammatical knowledge of our own language is the true foundation upon which all literature, properly so called, should be raised. If this method were adopted in our schools, children would have some notion of what they are going about, when they should enter into the Latin grammar, and would hardly be engaged so many years as they now are, in that most irksome and difficult part of literature, with so much labour of the memory, and with so little assistance of the understanding.” I shall only add another passage, as a corroborating proof, that a merchant may dispense with the dead languages.

“ The English language hath been much cultivated during the last two hundred years.

“ It hath been considerably polished and refined,  
“ its bounds have been greatly enlarged, its  
“ energy, variety, richness, and elegance, have  
“ been abundantly proved by numberless trials,  
“ in verse and prose, upon all subjects, and in  
“ every kind of style \*.”

On the strength of all these authorities I presume to recommend a grammatical pursuit of the English language from the age of eight to twelve years, during which time, it is to be hoped, a youth, intended to be a merchant, will be able to read, write, and speak with propriety, ease, and elegance, in his native tongue, more especially if he has been in the hands of an able private preceptor. Vulgar arithmetic and writing may share such parts of these four years, as are necessary to enliven study by variety.

The wholesale dealer or shop-keeper's education may receive the addition of two years further application to writing, to the branch of arithmetic which teaches book-keeping, and to the attainment of the French language, which being almost universally current, may be useful to him in the common course of business, especially as great numbers of foreigners, who converse in French, usually resort to England, in time of

\* See a short Introduction to English Grammar, by Dr. Lowth, late bishop of London. Printed for A. Millar, and T. Cadell, 1767.

peace. A lad thus qualified, is ready at the age of fourteen, to be an indentured apprentice.

But he, who is designed for the comprehensive profession of a British Merchant, must range through more extensive fields of science. After attaining a competent knowledge of the French language, he should study the Spanish, which is used in almost all the East, particularly on the coast of Africa, from the Canaries to the cape of Good Hope; the Italian, in use on all the coasts of the Mediterranean, and in many parts of the Levant; and the Teutonic, or German, which is common in almost all the northern countries of the globe.

The elements of general history, and a thorough knowledge of the chronological, political, and commercial history of his own country, should be his next concern. With these, and the principles of geography and navigation, we may allow him to enlarge and improve his understanding, till he attains the sixteenth year.

The nature of the consular jurisdiction, and of the laws, manners, and customs of the countries with which Great Britain carries on any considerable commerce, should now occupy part of his attention; and the several commercial institutions, with the use of banks, of bills of exchange, and the rules of circulation, another portion of his time.

He ought to inform himself accurately in what commodities each trading country abounds, what are the merchandize they demand from other countries, and from what places they receive them.

The customs, tolls, taxes, excises, convoys, and all other charges upon merchandize exported from or imported into his own and all foreign countries, should be another principal object for the young merchant. The prohibitions laid on various commodities in different nations, he should thoroughly acquaint himself with. The measures, weights, and coins, of all countries, should be familiar to him.

He should be taught to know on what conditions to freight and insure ships and merchandize; he should also be enabled to form a tolerable judgment of the prices of the several articles used for the building or repairing of ships; and also the manner of contracting for naval stores and provisions, with the ordinary rates of the wages of mariners.

He ought to acquire great expertness in the mode of transacting business at the Custom-house, and on the quays of the ports of his own country; and, in order to this, I should imagine, no better expedient could be devised, than to obtain leave for young gentlemen (educating for merchants) to practise under the principal agents for the Custom-house business; or



to be received as assistants to the clerks at the Long-room, and in the custom-houses of the out-ports, without fee or reward. Our young merchants being thus initiated, we should hereafter see all those difficulties and perplexities removed, which at present arise from blundering entries, or the over-hurry of the clerks; and these pupils would be a check upon the mal-practices of the inferior officers.

Having now brought on our youth to about the eighteenth year, if he has been introduced into a counting-house at home, and has been shewn the general manner of correspondence with foreign merchants, it will be advisable to finish his education, by sending him for two or three years more on his travels, recommending him at each place, where he is to reside a few months, to some considerable merchant, who should be advised to receive him without form or ceremony, on the footing of one of his family; and, so far as is consistent with the necessary secrecy of commercial transactions, to let him assist in his accounting-house, and in his warehouses.

By these means, at the age of majority, or perhaps one year later, he will return completely accomplished to appear on the Royal Exchange of London, with honour and credit to his friends, and true satisfaction to himself; in the respectable character of a British merchant.

Should he then succeed to the house of his ancestors, or be associated with that, or any



other capital company, he will be an acquisition to it of inestimable value; while those who are educated in this dissipated metropolis, and comment on the laws of commerce at coffee-houses or taverns, exhaust the funds of their fathers, ruin themselves and their partners, and sink down into the tomb of contempt, or oblivion, before they have half finished their mortal career.

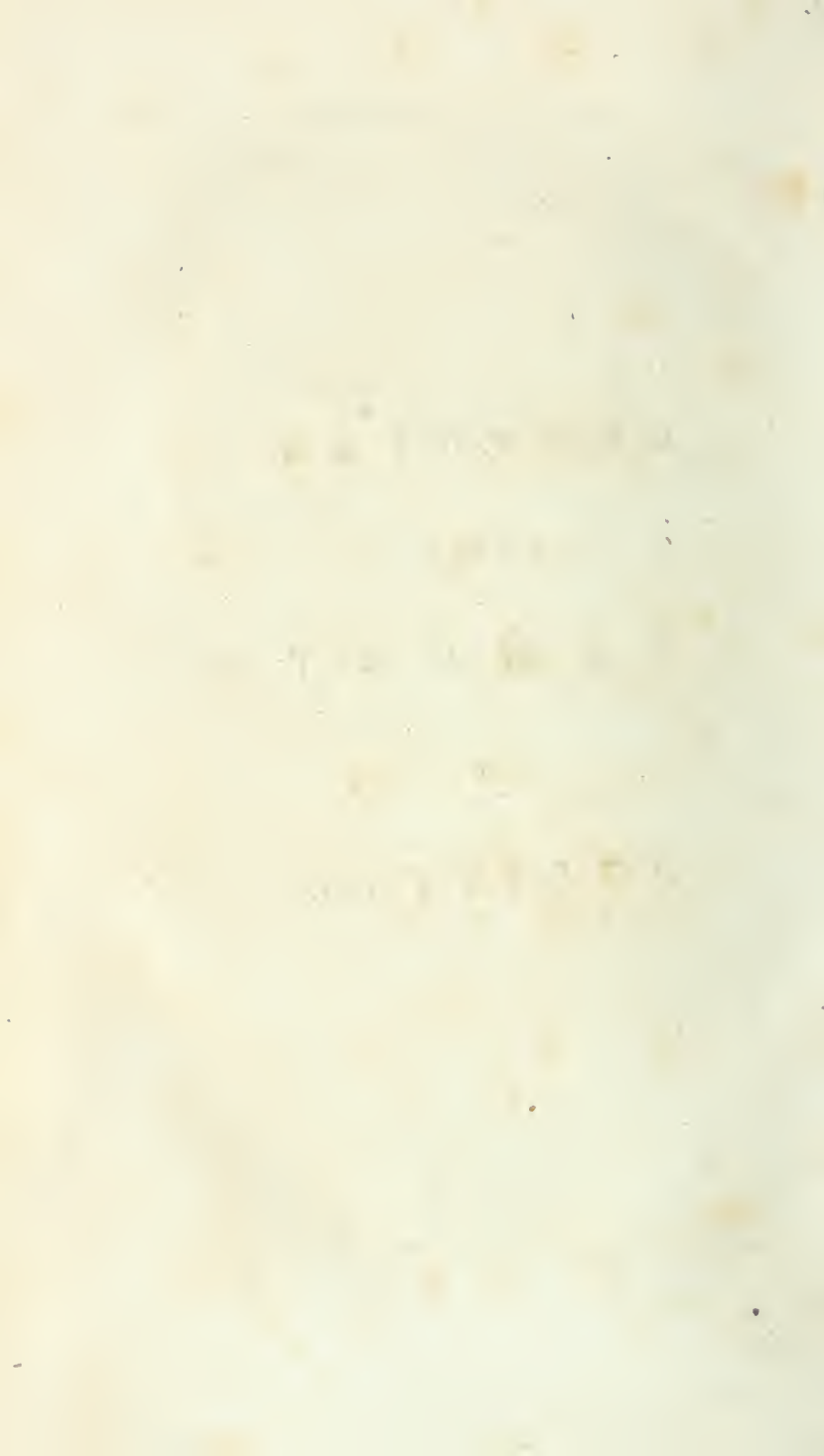
A firm attachment to the true principles of honour, a religious adherence to his word, clearness and integrity in his contracts, prudent generosity in his dealings with the industrious poor, with a becoming dignity and moral rectitude in his manners, joined to the accomplishments we have recommended, must pave the way to affluence; if most extraordinary misfortunes, such as seldom occur in life, do not prevent it; and opulence will afford the means to support those dignities in the state, which public esteem will not fail to confer, in this free country, on such exalted characters. Our young merchant, therefore, should keep the honours of magistracy, and the important charge of a British legislator, the representative of a free people, constantly in his eye. These should be his civic crowns; and if he can nobly resolve to sacrifice private ease and indulgence to the public good, being seated in the House of Commons, let him there boldly stand forth the intrepid advocate for the free constitution of his country, even in the worst of times. If merit of this  
cast

cast recommends him to his Sovereign, let him aspire to foreign embassies, to ministerial offices in foreign countries, for which he will be so well qualified; and after having rendered his country signal service, by protecting its rights and privileges abroad; if wisdom and integrity steer the helm of government, he may expect to be chosen as an assistant-pilot.

Happy would it be for this country, if we had more such accomplished merchants, as I have described, in parliament, and in the great councils of the state. Let this consideration, therefore, excite our British youth, designed for this honourable profession, to follow the plan of education here laid down.



LECTURES  
ON THE  
ELEMENTS  
OF  
*POLITICS.*



# ELEMENTS OF POLITICS.

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## LECTURE I.

**T**HE unprecedented revolution which took place in France, in the year 1789; the horrid catastrophe it produced; the succession of tyrannical usurpers whom it has since raised to supreme authority in that unfortunate kingdom; and the depredatory war which it has unjustly occasioned; having alarmed most of the ancient governments of Europe, for the safety and independence of their respective constitutions; there never could be a crisis, when it was so essentially necessary, as the commencement of the present century, to study the principles upon which the best systems of policy have been established, and the governments founded upon them have flourished for many ages.

The candid contemplator of the horrors which have spread devastation through several, and totally subverted some of those governments whilst it has endangered others, will find no difficulty



ficulty in attributing these national calamities, in a great degree, to false notions of political liberty, and of the elements, not of *Polity*, but of *Politics* at large. Notions zealously fomented and propagated by party leaders and their adherents, and made the basis of popular discontents, of seditious publications, and of tumultuous assemblies, which have required the most vigilant attention, and the most active exertions of our own well regulated government to suppress.

Politics have been made to stand for superior subtilty and guile; and to signify fraud and artifice; by means of which misrepresentations, wrong notions have been formed of ministers and statesmen; and it has been industriously propagated, that a person cannot be a good politician, without being an arrant villain, or an egregious knave: and thus government, which should ever be held sacred, and probity, which is essential to it, are represented as incompatible things, that cannot subsist together.

The early study of political wisdom is therefore essentially necessary for all who have the most distant prospect of filling any office of confidential trust and importance in the state; and I shall endeavour, in the course of these Lectures, to point out the utility of this study to every private individual of society, who has the least  
spark

spark of the *amor patriæ* in his breast, or any property in the world, on which he sets any real value: I shall also convince my readers, that of late years, the subjects of Great Britain would have been much happier, and the administration of government much easier, if a false definition of political wisdom had not too generally prevailed, both on the part of the rulers and the ruled, owing to our neglect in not making this important subject one great branch of the education of youth, more especially of the sons of the nobility, the gentry, and the merchants, or citizens of the first class. Instead of this, they are taken raw from school, or the university, and sent abroad, before they have been made acquainted with the political constitutions of the foreign nations it is intended they should visit. Ignorant of the nature of the British constitution, uninformed of the means by which Great Britain has gradually risen to that pre-eminence of power, riches, and happiness she now enjoys, unrivalled by any other nation in the known world; they are either carried away by the external appearances of things abroad, and return with prejudices against their native country; or (on their first outset in life) become the easy prey of party leaders; and, as ambition, personal vanity, family connexions, or self-interest bias them, take part with, or oppose, the ruling powers of the state.

A re-

A respectable writer on education (the late Mr. Sheridan) has very sensibly observed, “ That  
“ one of the principal points which ought to be  
“ kept in view by all legislative bodies, in every  
“ well regulated state is, the education of young  
“ gentlemen of noble birth, and high rank ;  
“ that their talents may be so directed and im-  
“ proved, as to qualify them, by a due and  
“ timely exertion of them, for the support of  
“ that government of which they are respec-  
“ table members.”—“ But the common modes  
“ of education pursued in England are not, by  
“ any means, calculated to promote this salutary  
“ end: the qualifications necessary to render  
“ the nobleman, the gentleman, and the gene-  
“ rous citizen, most truly useful to their country,  
“ must be drawn from other sources.”

The theory of commerce we have already shewn to be one.—We are now to proceed to the science of POLITICS, which is, of all others, the most useful to young gentlemen of rank and fortune in Great Britain.

The elements of Politics might have preceded those of commerce, in point of order, since, though the origin of commerce, and of civil government, may be equally traced to the earliest records of time, yet civil governments must have been formed while commerce was only in its infancy. But two obvious reasons determined me to give the lead to commerce—In  
the

the first place, I found an insuperable timidity prevailing in my mind, with respect to my present subject. It had been told me, that a most respectable statesman, the late earl of Chatham, being asked, when at the zenith of his power, where he learned politics? replied, "He picked them up in the streets."—Some asserted, that it was so idle, so vague, and so disgusting a subject, that I should never be able to fix the attention of either auditors or readers. On this account, it became necessary to explore the rich mines of commerce, and, as it were, (by an easy transition), to pass on to the science of politics; and to demonstrate, that the national and private advantages to be derived from the former, could only be acquired by a diligent study of the latter. My next motive (to this arrangement of the two subjects) arose from a review of the state of modern nations; many of them owing their particular systems of polity to commerce—Such, among others, are the states of Venice, Genoa, and Holland, whose political institutes are founded on commercial maxims.

This disposition of my plan has answered my warmest expectations, in the favourable reception of my former work.

Having shewn to what a degree of power, riches, and felicity, a state, and individuals, may arrive, by means of commerce; we are naturally

rally induced to search after the best political tenets; by which it is to be secured and supported.

We have already noticed the origin of civil society, under the head of commerce; but we must now treat this subject more amply.

All authors, both ancient and modern, who have written on the establishment and government of nations, however widely they have differed in their sentiments, concerning the best systems of administration, have been unanimous in this opinion, “ That without a due observance  
“ of certain, invariable principles of sound policy, which in their very nature are incontro-  
“ vertible, it would have been impossible ever  
“ to have brought mankind together in society,  
“ or to have established that harmony and union  
“ amongst them, which was indispensably necessary to render their associations for their  
“ common benefit, peaceful and permanent.”

I shall not presume to waste your time, by displaying a pedantic parade of erudition; it is sufficient that in my general list of works consulted, I have noted the ancient authors on whose authority I have founded what I have just mentioned on the obvious necessity of adhering to certain political principles.—What those principles are, and from whence derived, must be our next subject of enquiry.

But



But before I proceed, it may not be improper to give a few clear, concise definitions of the terms of the science we have now under consideration.

The science of Politics may be defined to consist in a skilful management of the public affairs of nations: in other words, it is a science which comprizes all those rules and measures of human actions, which lead to true happiness; and its end is, to acquire perfect skill in the management of the public affairs of nations, so as to provide for their safety and tranquillity, and to maintain good order and sound manners\*.

Polity is a more limited term, by which we define the form of government of any particular society: it means the civil constitution of any particular state, or capital city; and when its object is the internal administration of the latter, it is styled, by the French writers, *la police*, the police; a term newly engrafted into our language, to express every thing relative to the duties of the civil magistracy, under the head of preserving the public peace, by protecting those who obey the laws, and punishing those who violate them.

“ Polity consists in the attention of the prince  
“ and magistrates to preserve every thing in

\* Whether, indeed, politics may be properly termed the first philosophy, it is needless to dispute; but it will hardly be denied to have been one of the first cultivated sciences. The most ancient philosophers were all conversant in it; and many of them famed as legislators. *Lord Bolingbroke's Letters to Mr. Pope.*



“ order. Wise regulations ought to prescribe  
 “ whatever will best contribute to the public  
 “ safety, utility, and convenience; and those  
 “ who have the authority in their hands, cannot  
 “ be too attentive to their being observed. By  
 “ a wise polity, the sovereign accustoms the  
 “ people to order and obedience; and preserves  
 “ peace, tranquillity, and concord, among the  
 “ citizens. People have attributed to the ma-  
 “ gistrates of Holland singular talents with  
 “ respect to polity; their towns, and even their  
 “ establishments in the Indies, are generally  
 “ better governed than any other places in the  
 “ known world.”

Political arithmetic is the application of arith-  
 metical calculations to political uses; thereby  
 stating the produce of the public revenues of a  
 nation—the number of its people—extent and va-  
 lue of its lands, commerce, inland trade and manu-  
 factures—on which a scrutiny into the nature of  
 the taxes to be laid on the inhabitants is founded.

The term politician is commonly made use of  
 to define a statesman or statish, one perfectly  
 skilled in politics—well versed in the arts of go-  
 vernment—and one, who either has been, or  
 actually is employed in the management of the  
 public affairs of nations. But we must not con-  
 tent ourselves with this partial acceptation of the  
 word; since it is plain, that every citizen, in a  
 free state, may, nay ought to be a politician; and  
 he certainly ought to be so esteemed, who, in the  
 private

private walk of life, conducts himself according to the true principles of political wisdom; and thereby, as far as in him lies, studies and practises the art of government; and, in his particular station, contributes to, or promotes, the safety, welfare, tranquillity, and good order of the civil society of which he is a member.

These are the general terms, which I thought proper to explain—to prevent all perplexity, in the pursuit of our subject.

We will now return to our proposed inquiry.—What are the fixed, invariable principles of sound policy, according to the unanimous opinion of all legislators, and of every author, ancient and modern, on the subject, and from whence are they derived?

The principles, or elements of Policy are derived from three sources.

I. The divine, natural law; commonly called, The law of nature.

II. The inspired written law.

III. Civil codes of human institution.

The divine law of nature, is so called, by all ancient authors, because they maintained that the Deity, when he created man, impressed on his mind, and engraved on his heart, clear and distinct notions of a law that was to serve him as an invariable rule of action; that this passed by tradition, from father to son, till at length it was denominated common-right, or the law of

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nature.

nature. Most of the legislators of antiquity supported this opinion ; and always made a distinction between the oral and written law.

This law of nature is founded on three principles.

I. Religion.

II. Self-love.

III. Sociability.

The sole object of the first is, the duty that men owe to the Supreme Being.

Piety, or religion, generally considered, without regard to any particular theological systems, consists in an acknowledgment of the dependant state of mankind ; in a firm belief that man owes his existence and preservation to a supreme, perfect, eternal Being ; who is the first mover and cause of all things ; who governs and directs this sublunary world by the principles of unerring wisdom ; and who has a right to expect from us, the homage of genuine gratitude for his constant protection, and for the faculties he has bestowed on man, which give him the pre-eminence over all the works of the creation ; in whatever kind of worship, or adoration, therefore, the debt of gratitude is paid ; it is a duty dictated by the law of nature. A fear of offending or displeasing him, which we can only do, by departing from any of those principles of the law of nature, which respect our duty to him, to ourselves, or to mankind ; an entire submission

million to his will; and the purest sentiments of love, respect, and veneration, arising from the contemplation of his divine attributes, comprise the duties enjoined by this first principle of the law of nature.

The first duty of man, respecting himself, which arises out of the second principle of the law of nature, self-love, is, to form a just idea of his own nature; and of his passions, or affections.

The second duty, he owes himself, is, to be persuaded, that he holds his being from God, as a sacred pledge for which he is accountable to Him; consequently, that he is obliged to use all possible means to preserve that pledge; and by assiduous labour, mental or corporeal, to aid and improve his natural powers, so as to qualify them to produce actions worthy the excellency of his nature! In other words, he is to think and act in such a manner as he conceives to be most conformable to the divine will and perfections; and, as far as a finite being is capable of imitating the Deity, he is to make the attributes of the Creator his rule and model; from whence he will derive the practice of morality.

But man, not being born for himself alone, but being appointed to live in society with his own species; sociability, which is the third principle of the law of nature, we shall plainly demonstrate, was absolutely necessary, for the comfort and convenience of life.

A great number of authorities, from the most celebrated ancient writers, might be brought to support this important proposition; but it is so self evident, that I shall content myself with citing two beautiful passages on this subject, the one from Seneca, and the other, from our countryman, Dr. Ferguson, to whose excellent Essay on the History of Civil Society, I am much indebted.

Seneca, to prove the baseness of ingratitude, makes use of the following most nervous and elegant reasoning. “That nothing disturbs so  
“ much the concord and union of mankind,  
“ as this vice; for on what does our safety de-  
“ pend, if not on the mutual services we render  
“ to each other? Certainly, it is this commerce  
“ of benefits which alone renders life commo-  
“ dious, and puts us in a condition to defend  
“ ourselves against unforeseen insults and as-  
“ faults. What would be the condition of  
“ mankind, if each individual lived alone!  
“ As many of the species as led this solitary  
“ life, so many booties or victims would be  
“ prepared for other animals—a sacrifice easy to  
“ be made—in a word, weakness itself!

“ In fact, all other animals have strength  
“ sufficient for their defence—Those, that are  
“ quite savage, and whose ferocity will not per-  
“ mit them to herd together in troops, are born,  
“ as we may say, completely armed—whereas,  
“ man is, on every side, surrounded with weak-  
“ nefs

“ nefs—having neither nails nor teeth to render  
 “ him formidable—but these succours, of which  
 “ he is destitute by nature, he finds in society  
 “ with his equals. Nature, to indemnify him,  
 “ has given him two things, which, from weak  
 “ and miserable as he would have been without  
 “ them, render him very strong and very power-  
 “ ful. I mean reason and sociability—so that  
 “ he who, alone, could not resist any one,  
 “ becomes, by this union, master of all. So-  
 “ ciety gives him dominion over all other ani-  
 “ mals, not excepting even those of the sea,  
 “ which are produced and live in another ele-  
 “ ment. It is the social disposition which  
 “ stops the ravages of disease—furnishes suc-  
 “ cours to old age—assuages our griefs—gives  
 “ us a claim to implore the assistance of others,  
 “ against the accidents of fortune; and inspires  
 “ us with courage to support them.—Take away  
 “ sociability, and you will destroy the union of  
 “ mankind—on which depends the preservation  
 “ and happiness of life.” *Seneca de Benef.*

*l. 4. c. 18.*

“ If both the earliest and latest accounts, col-  
 “ lected from every quarter of the earth, repre-  
 “ sent mankind as assembled in troops and com-  
 “ panies; and the individual always joined by  
 “ affection to one party, while he is possibly  
 “ opposed to another; employed in the exercise  
 “ of recollection and foresight; inclined to



“ communicate his own sentiments, and to be  
 “ made acquainted with those of others: these  
 “ facts must be admitted as the foundation of  
 “ all our reasoning relative to man. His mixed  
 “ disposition to friendship or enmity, his reason,  
 “ his use of language and articulate sounds,  
 “ like the shape and the erect position of his  
 “ body, are to be considered as so many attri-  
 “ butes of his nature: they are to be retained  
 “ in his description, as the wing and the paw  
 “ are in that of the eagle and the lion; and  
 “ as difference in degrees of fierceness, vigi-  
 “ lance, timidity, or speed, are made to occupy  
 “ a place in the natural history of different  
 “ animals.” *Ferguson.*

But it is not sufficient to have discovered the  
 origin, the necessity, and good effects of society  
 amongst men; our subject requires, that we  
 should lay down the rules and obligations arising  
 out of the general principles of the law of  
 nature.

These may be reduced to four capital points.

1. Never to injure any man.

2. To do unto others, as we would wish they  
 should do unto us, negatively; not to make  
 others suffer, what we cannot endure our-  
 selves.

3. If we have transgressed this rule of right,  
 by injuring any one, in his person, his reputa-  
 tion,

tion, or his property, to repair it incessantly, to the utmost of our abilities.

4. It is not sufficient to abstain from hurting others; we must do them all the good in our power.

Remark.—It may now be demanded, with great propriety, what instruction do we derive from this definition of the law of nature? My answer is—That from its three grand principles we learn—

1. That we cannot possibly be atheists.
2. That we must not be suicides.
3. That we have no right to be idlers.
4. That we did not come into the world to be hermits.

Farther researches into the state of nature, would only lead us into discussions foreign to our subject; all the knowledge we want to deduce from antiquity, or the natural history of mankind, in their rude state, before the impressions of property and interest took place, is, “That every individual of the species was, “by nature, designed for a member of community; and consequently, considered in this “capacity, appears not to have been made for “himself, but for society;” and that the principles of natural law are founded upon the social disposition, which distinguishes the human race from that of all other animals.

We

We will now proceed to shew, that the law of nations, which originally cemented and united different societies in one bond of common amity, has its origin in the principles of the law of nature.

## LECTURE II.

## ON THE LAW OF NATIONS.

WE all know where it is written, “Thou  
“ shalt love the Lord thy God with all  
“ thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy  
“ mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

“ On these two commandments hang all the  
“ law and the prophets.”

And on these likewise, depend all the systems  
of sound policy, in every well-regulated society  
on earth; for on these are founded,

The Law of Nations, the next object of our  
consideration.

The law of nations, properly defined, is no  
more than a just and rational application of the  
law of nature, respecting individuals, to the public  
affairs and conduct of states.

Natural law, says Hobbes, is divided into the  
natural law of man, and the natural law of  
states; and the latter is what we call the law of  
nations. The same definition is given by Bur-  
lamaqui the civilian, in other words. “Natural  
“ law, and the law of nations, are in reality  
“ one and the same thing, and differ only by  
“ an external denomination. We must there-  
“ fore

“ fore say, that the law of nations, properly so  
“ called, and considered as a law proceeding  
“ from the Deity, is nothing else but the law of  
“ nature itself; not applied to men, considered  
“ simply as such, but to nations, states, or  
“ their chiefs, in the relations they have toge-  
“ ther, and the several interests they have to  
“ manage between each other.”

One would imagine this rational deduction of the origin of the law of nations to be so obvious to the meanest capacity, that it could not possibly have met with opponents; but what law so sacred, what maxim so clear, that the faculties of men, under the influence of the passions of ambition or interest, will not attempt to obscure, or to explain away the force of, by unnatural interpretations!

Besides those respectable authorities already cited, we have the opinions of Justinian, Puffendorf, Barbeyrac, Wolfe, Montesquieu, Vattel, and others of less note, in our favour. But, as the consequence of proving that the law of nations is no more than the law of nature, respecting individuals, applied to the affairs of civil societies, is, the establishment of certain natural obligations on nations, which they cannot dispense with, for the laws of nature are eternal and immutable; a set of modern writers have started up, who have endeavoured, because they could not reconcile the conduct of modern

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powers

powers to the just and equitable maxims of natural law, to maintain, that there is no such thing as an immutable, obligatory law of nations, founded on the law of nature.

To countenance the violations of the rights of human nature, which have been made with impunity by tyrants ; their flatterers and sycophants have had recourse to an artful expedient, derived from false principles of policy. As political necessity and reasons of state are the rules of conduct, which sovereigns and their ministers have thought proper to substitute in the place of natural law, or the law of nations, it became necessary to give some colour to this alteration in the systems of modern governments ; and therefore, the following doctrine has been warmly contended for, by the enemies to the freedom and independence of mankind :

“ That the law of nations is arbitrary, and  
“ only founded on express, or tacit conven-  
“ tions.”

We are willing to give this political maxim its full force, when it is not meant to uphold tenets contrariant to the immutable, indispensable obligations of the law of nature ; or to reduce the true law of nations to the level of ministerial artifice : we shall readily allow, that there is a voluntary, customary law of nations, which may be justly termed subordinate to natural law ; and we shall endeavour to mark out its just boundaries ;



boundaries; but the policy of modern nations having clearly demonstrated that princes and ministers of state have aimed at making void the obligatory rules of the true law of nations, by rendering the customary law superior to that which is derived from nature; thereby finding plausible pretexts to act contrary to the common interests of mankind; or, which is the same thing, to the unalterable rules of sincerity, justice, and humanity; it will be necessary to prove,

First, That the true law of nations, deduced from the principles of natural law, is obligatory in its own nature; and that all its necessary rules ought to be universally observed; because the principles of sociability are universal.

Secondly, That the customary law of nations, founded on casual consent, or on express or tacit conventions, cannot be obligatory any further, than as it is reconcileable to the principles of natural law.

Thirdly, That sovereigns, or states, pretending to ground their political conduct on any customary or arbitrary law, which deviates from the elements of natural law, if they thereby injure other nations, act upon tyrannic principles, and are to be considered as public criminals, who deserve condign punishment as much, or more, in proportion to the mischief they have done, than private individuals, who violate the laws of  
common

common right, or, in other words, the law of nature.

After having discussed these points, that no mistake may be pleaded by artful politicians, we shall give in their order, from the best authorities, those eternal obligations contained in the true law of nations, which differ in no respect from the law of nature, and which, on that account, no rulers or people on the habitable globe, can dispense with, or alter, even by common consent, without transgressing their duty. In the next place, it shall be made appear that all human treaties and conventions ought to be conformable to these rules ; and finally, the well known maxims of the customary law of nations, so far as they are reconcileable to the principles of common right, shall be clearly stated.

From the principle of sociability we must prove our first position ; for from that principle, as from their real source, all the laws of society, and all our general and particular duties towards other men are derived.

This spirit of union, which the Supreme Being has implanted in the soul of man, requires, that in every thing relating to society, the public good should be the supreme rule of conduct ; and that, guided by the counsels of prudence, men should never pursue their private advantage to the prejudice of the public ; for this is what the state of mankind demands, and it is consequently, the will of our common Father.

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The principle of sociability is universal. Human society embraces all those with whom we can possibly have any communication ; because it is founded on the relations we all bear to one another, in consequence of our nature and state. See *Puffendorf*.

Reason next informs us, that creatures of the same rank and species, born with the same faculties to live in society, and to partake of the same advantages, have, in general, an equal and common right. We are therefore obliged to consider ourselves as naturally equal, and to behave as such ; and it would be bidding defiance to nature, and the God of nature, not to acknowledge this principle of equity, by the Civilians styled, *æquabilitas juris*, as one of the first foundations of society. On this principle is built the *lex talionis* ; as also the scripture precept, “ To do unto others as we would wish they “ should do unto us.”

Sociability being a reciprocal obligation among men, such as through malice, or injustice, break the bond of society, cannot reasonably complain, if they are considered as common enemies to the natural rights of mankind, and are proceeded against, by coercive measures.

These general maxims are replete with consequences, which establish the immutability and universality of the obligations contained in the natural law of nations. For if the Deity, by  
means

means of right reason, enjoins certain duties between individuals, it follows, that nations, which are only large societies of individuals, should be bound by the same reciprocal duties to each other.

But this will appear more evident, when we consider, that though the various systems of government established among mankind, introduced a great change in the state of nature, yet it was never the intention of any honest or wise legislator to subvert it entirely, or to destroy the essential relations between man and man, or between God and man. On the contrary, the civil state supposes the nature of man to be such as the Creator has formed it; it supposes the primitive state of union, with all the relations it includes; it supposes, in fine, the natural dependence of man with respect to the Supreme Being, and the laws of nature. The plan of a just government, therefore, instead of subverting this first order of nature, ever was, and always will be, to give a new degree of force and consistency to all our natural duties. Every system of policy not proceeding upon this principle, is a species of tyranny, more properly than a form of government. “ Nations or states,” says Vattel, “ are  
“ bodies politic; societies of men united toge-  
“ ther, to procure their mutual safety and ad-  
“ vantage, by means of their union.

“ Each society has its particular affairs and  
“ interests; it deliberates and takes resolutions

“ in common, and thus becomes a moral person, having an understanding and a will peculiar to itself, and being susceptible of obligations and laws.”

Now, from this definition of bodies politic, under whatever form they may be distinguished, a consequence follows, of the utmost importance to our cause.

Civil societies are states of equality ; a parity of right is established by nature between them, and obliges them, if they do their duty, to have a reciprocal regard for each other's welfare and tranquillity. Hence the general principle of the law of nations is nothing more, than the general law of sociability, which obliges all nations, that have any intercourse with each other, to practise those duties to which individuals are naturally subject. And considering bodies politic as moral persons, it is plain there can be but one sole and the same rule of justice and common right, for all mankind.

I cannot adduce any stronger arguments to prove, that from the commencement of civil society, a set of invariable rules or maxims must have been established for the government of the whole human race, to enable them to advance towards the perfection of their natures, and to live like rational beings.

Notwithstanding these maxims may have been lost in ages of barbarism, obscured by bigotry  
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and superstition, or obstructed by modern policy, yet, they are not the less immutable and obligatory on all civilized nations, to latest posterity; and as they form what may be properly styled, the positive law of nations, I shall delineate them, in as concise a manner as possible; and establish them as invariable, true political principles.

The general obligations of civil societies to each other are,

I. That all nations should reciprocally contribute to each other's happiness and prosperity. This is what the law of nature required at first, between man and man; but as every individual owes a primary duty to himself, which surpasses all other obligations, so it is with nations; therefore, the law of nations, in prescribing universal benevolence, does not mean to extend it so far, as that any nation should assist another, or promote its interest, to its own detriment: the general obligation ceases, when that is the case; because the performance of it is deemed morally and politically impossible.

To render this familiar by example:—Let us suppose Great Britain demanded of a power, with whom she was not only at peace, but actually allied by the strongest treaties of amity, to permit the free entrance and consumption of certain British manufactures in that state: a refusal might be justly given, without violating the law of nations; and in these terms—“ Our



“ state cannot subsist without the revenues arising from the duties of importation on foreign manufactures ; besides, we have established similar manufactures of our own : we cannot, therefore, assist you in the disposal of your’s ; nor thus promote your commercial interest, without manifest prejudice to our own state.” The same may be urged with regard to military succours ; and the being engaged in the quarrels of nations ; as these may prove essentially injurious to the assisting state.

But if the calamities of famine, fire, inundations, or earthquakes, desolate nations ; it then becomes an indispensable obligation on all other nations to lend their immediate and effectual assistance to the suffering state, in proportion to their power and abilities, and to the distressed circumstances of the sufferers.

Such was the unhappy fate of Lisbon, A. D. 1755—and to the immortal honour of Great Britain ! she was the first to put in practice this general obligation of the law of nations, by affording speedy and liberal succours.

II. Not to invade each other’s dominions, nor perform any acts of hostility suddenly, or by surprize ; nor without previously assigning just and sufficient cause.

The conduct of modern nations has frequently been diametrically repugnant to this equitable principle of the law of nations ; and occasional violations,

violations of it, have but too plainly proved, in these latter times, that even Christian powers have considered it, as having no other basis but arbitrary custom, which might be broke through on every occasion, administered by political necessity. To the misfortune of mankind, they have adopted, too seriously, the opinions of writers, who were enemies to the civil rights of mankind, and friends to tyranny and oppression :—hence, the invasion of the territories of the savage, but to them innocent inhabitants of Asia and America—the seizing on their property—the expulsion, captivity, and massacre of the natives, under the plausible pretext of civilizing them :

And hence, a reproachful innovation on the common rights of the subjects of all nations upon earth, has been contended for ;—has actually been carried into execution by Great Britain ;—and has been applauded, as a mark of public spirit, and political wisdom ! I mean, the seizing, by force of arms, on the persons and effects of the private subjects of any nation, previous to a public declaration of war. By the law of nations, no state ought to proceed to acts of hostility against another, till such a declaration has been made ; for the subjects of each, who cannot be supposed to enter into the intrigues of courts, repose securely on the good faith subsisting be-

tween their sovereign, and the powers with whom he is at peace ; and, in that confidence, they adventure their persons and properties on the perilous ocean : nor can they have any other means to be informed that a rupture has happened, but a declaration of war ; which instantly puts them on their guard, and enables them to provide for their security. But to ruin and destroy them prior to such a declaration, is no better than piracy ; and cannot be justified on any principle of political necessity whatever.

Some modern writers and politicians have asserted, that the retaliating party is not obliged to make a public declaration against the assailant : but they are in the wrong ; for neutral nations cannot pretend to determine which party is the aggressor, barely by their manifestoes ; and as the interests of civil societies are variously connected and combined by treaties, which sometimes are of a very private nature ; it appears to be highly obligatory on nations, between whom a rupture has happened, to give public notice of it, by the accustomed solemn declarations of war. In fact, this is an indispensable obligation, imposed by the second principle of the positive law of nations, in order that the lives and properties of the subjects of neutral nations may not be unexpectedly endangered by their connexions with the contending parties—connexions formed in times of profound peace ;  
and

and often concentrated in commercial transactions alone.

No degree of power then, nor any possible advantage to be derived from the exercise of it, will prevail with the statesman, who considers the Law of Nations as founded on the Law of Nature; and that, as being consonant to our ideas of the attributes of equity and goodness in the Deity; to violate so fundamental a principle of honest policy.

But, on the contrary, he who looks upon the law of nations to be founded only on arbitrary custom, and the casual consent of states, will break through it, with as much ease, and as little ceremony, as through a private particular convention between nation and nation; whenever a political necessity, or a political advantage occurs; but let him remember, that in such a case, he leaves a stain upon his country, which no military achievements, no territorial or commercial successes can erase; and has opened a door to illegal retaliation.

III. Not to molest, hurt, imprison, or put to death, the subjects of one nation residing in another; nor to seize on, or confiscate their effects, without a just cause.

IV. To exercise all the offices of common humanity to each other: such as sending out assistance from sea-ports to the relief of ships in distress—furnishing the crews with provisions—

and affording all due succours to nations afflicted with famine, and other dreadful calamities. Therefore, no nation ought to take umbrage at another for supplying its enemy with provisions and other necessaries of life, when its fleets or armies touch at a neutral country; for they have a right to demand such succours by the law of nations; and even to take them by force, if refused. The Turks, therefore, could not declare war against Great Britain, on account of our furnishing provisions, and other necessaries, to the Russian fleets in our ports; nor even for selling them warlike stores. But if we had transported these to the scene of action in our own ships, the Turks would have had a right to seize them, and to confiscate both ships and cargoes: and it was on this principle we seized several Dutch ships carrying ammunition to our enemies the French, during the last war.

V. To allow of a mutual intercourse with each other, when no particular reasons of state, forbid it.

VI. Not to declare war against each other, but for the most weighty reasons: never for trifles. For war is the severest act of public justice; since its end is, the destruction of mankind.

To declare war, is to pronounce a sentence of death against a nation; which we resolve to execute, when in our power. If then, we are  
not

not insensible to the feelings of humanity, we should seriously ask ourselves this question—Has the offending prince, and his subjects, so deeply transgressed, that nothing will do but putting them to death? Would to God this point were more conscientiously debated, in the councils of Christian kings, before they cry havock, and let loose the dogs of war!

VII. To respect that freedom and independence, which each nation derives from the law of nature; and which we are as much bound to let them enjoy peaceably, though we have superior strength on our side, as we are not to deprive an individual of his personal liberty, if he has not violated the laws of the country in which he resides.

From this liberty and independence it follows, that nations, like private persons, are to judge conscientiously of what they can or cannot do; of what is proper or improper to be done; and, consequently, to examine and determine what offices they can perform for each other; and what they may equitably refuse. In all cases therefore, where a nation has the liberty of judging what its duty requires; another cannot compel it to act in this, or that manner, as the requiring nation shall dictate. For to attempt this, is to violate the natural liberty of nations.

It may now be comprehended, without difficulty, why the right is always imperfect, when  
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the obligation which answersto it, depends on the judgment of another. Our obligation is always imperfect in relation to others, when the decision of what we have to do is reserved to ourselves; and this decision is reserved to us on all occasions, where we have a right to be free.

Nations then, like individuals, deriving from the law of nature, a state of rational independence, the honour of a nation, as well as the conscience of a private man, must be sometimes relied on; and therefore, we must leave to all nations, a right to determine within themselves, on certain obligations they owe to universal society; and, in many instances, to put their own construction on some parts of the law of nations: their adherence to many particulars, must consequently be voluntary, and cannot be compulsory; because, we are not to destroy the natural right they have to form their own particular governments or administrations, on principles which they may judge equitable and conscientious, but which, in some respects, may clash with the general law of nations. Such, for instance, are the particular regulations of different states, with respect to religion, commerce, and the administration of justice; for however some of these may be found to deviate even from the common rights of humanity, yet nations cannot interfere in the contests that may arise between the people and their governors, in any state, on account of such regulations.

And this leads me to the discussion of the customary law of nations, founded on the various constructions of the principles of the positive law of nations, by different civil societies of men.

Persecutions for religious systems and opinions, are manifest infringements on the law of nature and of nations; but if a particular state dooms to death one half of its subjects, it is customary for other nations not to take part in the affair; for this would be to involve the whole world in continual wars. The unhappy people, having submitted to the system of polity established in their country, must effectuate a revolution themselves, or patiently endure their hard lot; but they cannot claim foreign succour, on the general principles of the law of nations.

It is absolutely necessary then, for the peace of the world, that nations should take no notice of open scenes of barbarity and oppression in others; because they are not entitled to oppose them by force of arms: for this would be to violate the freedom and independence each nation asserts, to govern its own domains, on principles peculiar to itself, and said to be adapted to the climate, genius, temper, and manners of the inhabitants. For this reason it is agreed upon, by the general consent of all civilized nations, not to intermeddle in the great revolutions that happen in the different societies of men:

men : on the sole principle of observing the law of nations. Where they are bound by treaties to guaranty successions, the case is different ; it then becomes political law.

Or if, on a projected revolution, the majority of the oppressed state, or any branch of its legislature apply (by request) for foreign aid ; then it becomes a matter of political consideration in the nation applied to, whether they shall interfere, or not ?

This was the case, at the glorious revolution, when King William was invited over, and was assisted by the states-general.

But if no such treaties subsist, nor no such particular application is made for relief, the connections with foreign states, and the *routine* of external, political affairs, often go on in the same channel, amidst the internal commotions of a state.

We even frequently see ambassadors, and other persons invested with public characters, remain, and perform their functions during a civil war, or a revolution. This was the case at the remarkable revolution in Russia which placed Catherine II. on the throne ; and it has happened on many occasions of a similar nature :---too many indeed to recite.

It is a customary obligation for nations to notify to each other, when any general epidemical diseases rage in their dominions ; and to give  
bills

bills of health to masters of ships, and to all travellers passing from one country to another, to ascertain the healthy state of each; and, by this means, to promote the safety of mutual intercourse.

It is customary to respect the persons and characters of ambassadors, and other public ministers; and, in all civilized nations, to grant them certain privileges and immunities.

It is a received maxim, but too often deviated from, not to corrupt and seduce each other's subjects; but the establishment of manufactures in most modern states, has arisen, in a great degree, from repeated violations of this maxim.

It is equally interdicted to nations, to sow discord, or foment divisions or rebellions in each other's dominions, by clandestine means; as by spies and private emissaries—to gain over each other's allies secretly—to deprive each other of any natural or acquired advantages—or to tarnish the renown and splendour of each other's fame.

The honours of precedence, of the flag, dominion of the seas, and other privileges of the like nature, are also founded on custom; and, as such, are rather arbitrary than binding.

It is with reluctance I find myself obliged to close this head, with a remark very unfavourable to modern policy:

As private men are apt to weigh the obligations they owe to their neighbours, more by  
their

their internal notions of their duty, than by positive laws, where these are not enforced by pains and penalties ; so nations will often evade, or explain away, by political refinements, or by the rules and maxims of their political polity, the general obligations of the law of nations : it follows therefore, of course, that, for the most part, they will be but imperfectly observed.

Yet, from the general principles of the law of nature and of nations, are derived all the systems of government in the known world.

Our next enquiry then, must be directed to the origin, or first rise of governments.

## LECTURE III.

## ON THE ORIGIN OF GOVERNMENTS.

THE necessity of men's associating together, has been already pointed out: the equal necessity of establishing some system of government, to preserve those associations, and to render them permanent and happy, will appear from a due attention to the first principle of all rational governments, Civil Liberty.

The freedom of individuals, secured by the wisdom and integrity of the community, was the first object of all wise and honest legislators. But as many errors of conduct have arisen in the best regulated societies, from false ideas of civil liberty, which ignorant men often confound with natural liberty, it may be proper, in this place, to give a true definition of both.

Natural Liberty is the right which nature gives to all mankind, to dispose of their persons and property, in the manner they think most conducive to their happiness; on condition of their keeping within the limits of the law of nature; which prescribes, the not abusing that liberty, to the injury of others: from hence it is observable, "that natural liberty is not entirely  
" a state



“ a state of independence, as some have fondly  
“ imagined; for there is a restraint from mis-  
“ chief and evil actions, arising out of the natu-  
“ ral obligations of man to man; independent  
“ of society.”.

Thus, to the right of natural liberty, there ever belonged a reciprocal obligation, not to molest others in the enjoyment of the same right; but the force of separate interests, and of the passions, prompted men, in their primitive state, to a violation of this reciprocal tie.

The proud, the lustful, the savage, and the robust, disturbed the tranquillity of the meek, the temperate, and the virtuous, on whose natural rights they made the most shameful encroachments, by means either of fraud, or violence: as therefore, man through necessity had associated with his own species to defend him from other animals, so now it became as necessary to secure him from the assaults of his fellow mortals, which could not be effected any other way but by surrendering, in a great measure, his natural liberty into the hands of one, or more persons, who, by the common consent of all the members of the association, to which he belonged, should be invested with authority to govern the rest; and armed with power to enforce that authority. Thus men submitted to be governed; and the restraints laid on natural liberty, by the institutes of government, gave it, as it were,

a new creation and a new name ; for it thenceforth became Civil Liberty.

The advantages of this change are too evident to be called in question. It is true civil liberty differs from natural, in that it divests individuals of the free disposal of their persons and actions, and lodges it in the hands of their rulers ; but they are thereby secured against the lawless rapine and violence of malevolent individuals ; and they acquire three very considerable rights from civil liberty.

1. That of insisting, that these rulers or sovereigns shall make a good use of their authority ; particularly by insuring to them, that protection, in consideration of which they resigned their natural liberty.

2. That of demanding, or exacting from their rulers, solemn promises, oaths, and covenants, for the due performance of their respective duties.

3. The right of claiming the aid and assistance of all good men, to enable them to compel their governors to protect them in their civil rights and immunities ; or, on failure thereof, to remove them, and elect others, more worthy to govern.

Civil liberty, the first principle of all wise governments, adequately defined, is then, no other but natural liberty itself, divested of that part which constituted the rational independence of individuals,

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individuals, by the authority which it confers on a sovereign; attended with a right of insisting on his making a good use of his authority; and a moral security that this right will have its effect.

Since civil liberty, therefore, is far preferable to natural liberty, we may safely conclude, that the form of government which secures to mankind the most ample enjoyment of this invaluable blessing, is, of all human states, the most perfect, the most rational, and, of course, the best adapted to the nature of man.

But before I proceed to the second principle, let me be permitted to point out the utility of the reflections already made on the advantages men derive from the institution of government.

They deserve very great attention, being very proper to remove the false notions which most people entertain upon this subject; as if the civil state could not be established but in prejudice to their natural liberty; and as if government had been invented only to satisfy the ambition of designing men, contrary to the interest of the rest of the community.

They must inspire men with love and veneration for so salutary an institution; and dispose them to submit cheerfully to whatever the laws of civil society require of them; from a conviction, that the benefits from thence derived, are very considerable.

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They may likewise contribute greatly to cultivate the love of our country ; the first seeds of which, nature herself has implanted in the hearts of all mankind, in order to promote, as it does most essentially, the happiness of society.

Sextus Empiricus relates, “ That it was a  
 “ custom among the ancient Persians, upon the  
 “ death of a king, to pass five days in a state  
 “ of anarchy, as an inducement to be more  
 “ faithful to his successor, from the experience  
 “ they acquired of the inconveniencies of anar-  
 “ chy ; of the many murders, robberies, and  
 “ every other mischief with which it is preg-  
 “ nant.”

And as these reflections are calculated to remove the prejudices of private people against government ; so likewise do they contain most excellent instructions and admonitions to sovereigns. For can any thing be better adapted to make princes sensible of the full extent of their duty, than to lay before them, the ends which the people purposed to themselves, when they entrusted them with the custody of their natural liberty ; and the solemn engagements into which they entered, by the very act of charging themselves with this sacred deposit. We have seen, that by civil liberty mankind acquired certain rights from their sovereigns, and we have shewn what they are. In a word, whatever has been said concerning the advantages of the institution of government, in preference to the state of

nature, supposes the administration of it to be as perfect, as the frailty of human reason will admit : that both subjects and sovereigns discharge their reciprocal obligations to each other. *Burlamaqui.*

The second principle, on which civil governments were originally formed was, the ascertaining and securing private property, which was the next object to civil liberty, and may therefore be deemed the second principle of Politics.

The third principle was, the institution of civil codes or written ordinances, agreed on by the common consent of the community : obedience to which, was enforced by pains and penalties, which Burlamaqui calls Law, in its general sense, and thus defines it : “ It is a rule prescribed by  
“ the sovereign of a society to his subjects, in or-  
“ der to lay an obligation upon them of doing  
“ or omitting certain things under the commi-  
“ nation of punishments, or to leave them at  
“ liberty to act or not, in other things, as they  
“ think proper ; and to secure to them, in this  
“ respect, the full enjoyment of their rights.”

Laws, therefore, were instituted to oblige subjects to pursue their real interest ; and to choose the surest way to attain true happiness.

Whatever the law does not forbid, is permitted ; and on this permission are founded the rights of individuals in any state ; and all deviation

tion from this rule, must have for its end, licentiousness, or sedition.

The fourth principle was, to put into the hands of the person or persons appointed to govern, a certain degree of power and strength; to defend the community from all external assaults from foreign enemies.

From this deduction of the original principles of all civil governments, we plainly discover, that their true source was the divine and written law of nature, and civil codes, of human institution, which we specified under the head of the law of nature.

All other principles of government arise out of these; and may more properly be stiled, the institutes of particular nations, than the general Elements of Politics.

On these then, were formed the first solemn compacts or covenants, between the mass of the people, submitting to be ruled, and their rulers. The latter, covenanting on their parts, to provide for the honour, safety, and interest of the former; and they, for themselves, stipulating to obey them, so long as they should govern them, according to the maxims of virtue and equity. But though all men agreed as to the expediency of framing civil governments, on the principles just laid down, yet great differences arose with respect to the mode, or particular system, that was best adapted to these principles.



I know some writers warmly contend for the antiquity of monarchy, or government vested in the hands of a single person; they even go a step further, and pretend, that in the first ages of the world, men were unanimous in their choice of this kind of government. It is not to our purpose to discuss this point: but we may pertinently venture one remark:

That, admitting the antiquity and universality of monarchy, it makes against the advocates for that system of government; for, had it been the best calculated to preserve inviolate the grand principles on which civil compacts were first formed, it would have been the only form of government in the world to this hour; but as this is not the case, we must be obliged, in admitting the antiquity of monarchy, to enquire into the causes of the introduction of other systems; and this now follows, in the order of our subject.

It is a truth, supported by historical evidence, from all quarters of the globe, that as societies of men multiplied, a diversity of opinions arose with respect to the internal frame of government; and that various modes were adopted, for the better securing the allegiance of the subject to the supreme power; and for preserving inviolate, the privileges of the people.

The fatal effects of the passions, soon made it evident that the sovereign authority, lodged in  
the

the hands of one man, might possibly prove more detrimental than beneficial to society : hence, other forms of government were devised ; and, by the time these were carried into execution, the jarring interests of the several societies already established, produced violations of the law of nature and of nations ; from whence arose, civil dissensions and wars ; the consequences of which were, that some societies being oppressed, by the supreme governor's having violated his part of the compact, by which he was appointed to rule over them, implored the assistance of neighbouring states, to enable them to shake off the yoke of obedience.

In other societies, the people having violated their engagements, the supreme power was obliged to have recourse to the assistance of some foreign potentate ; to enable him to reduce his rebellious subjects within the limits of legal subjection.

But very often it happened, that the bands of civil society, once loosened, its dissolution soon followed ; and, as often, perfidy wore the mask of friendship ; and the ally, called in to assist a distressed Monarch, or an injured People, became Conqueror of both.

From this slight sketch of the dire consequences of the passions, we may readily account for the introduction of different systems of government : further evidence on this head, would

carry us deep into the records of history, and wide of our plan.—Suffice it then to observe, that we stand indebted to these early dissensions in political opinions, for all the improved systems of Policy, which have since prevailed in the world.

## LECTURE IV.

ON THE DIFFERENT FORMS OF GOVERNMENT,  
WHICH HAVE GENERALLY PREVAILED IN  
THE WORLD.

WE will now take a view of the different forms of government which have owed their rise to the combined causes just mentioned.

The result will be, an enquiry, which is the best? And this question must be determined by the elementary principles of sound policy, deduced from the Law of Nature and of Nations.

By way of introduction, permit me to remark—

That every form of government has its advantages and inconveniences inseparably attached to its constitution. It is in vain to seek for a government absolutely perfect; for however any one may appear so in speculation, yet, when reduced to practice, it will ever partake of the frailties and imperfections of human nature.

Political writers have agreed to range the several forms of government, that have been instituted by mankind, under three general denominations.

Monarchy,

Monarchy,  
Aristocracy,  
Democracy.

And they thus define them—

Monarchy is the government of a state by a single person ; the sole ruler or governor of that state. This sole ruler may be differently stiled ; for, whether he is called chieftain, king, or emperor, still the people submitting to his sway, live under monarchical government.

By this definition it evidently appears, that the first civil governments were of this kind ; the very idea of a sole ruler, being derived from the natural authority of the father of a family ; as he was, *pater familiæ*, so was the supreme, sole ruler to be, *pater patriæ* ; the common father of the whole community.

Monarchy then undoubtedly claims the precedence, on account of its antiquity, to all other forms of government ; though much learning and ingenuity has been displayed by the celebrated Gordon, in his Treatise on Government, to controvert this point ; which was supported by the concurrent testimony of all the ancient writers.

But it as plainly appears, from every respectable authority, ancient and modern, that the power of these sole governors, by what title soever distinguished, was derived from, and limited by the people ; and also, that it was but very  
small

small in the beginning, and gradually became enlarged.

This observation I make, by way of introduction to a distinction allowed of by all political writers—of three kinds of Monarchy.

1. Absolute.

2. Limited.

3. Mixed.

Respecting the first I shall lay down a proposition, that will perhaps surprize the many advocates for despotism; for which reason, I thus publicly declare, that I shall, with great readiness, retract it, if it be clearly proved, that I have either misconceived, or misapplied the sentiments of the venerable authors, from whom I have borrowed it.

“ Absolute Monarchy then, or the govern-  
 “ ment of one person, by the measure of his  
 “ own will and power, independent of any re-  
 “ straint from the people he governs, or any  
 “ laws by them enacted, and by him assented  
 “ to, is only another name for Tyranny, or Au-  
 “ tocracy, a cruel and violent government, un-  
 “ lawfully usurped; having no claim to origin  
 “ or antiquity, nor any pretension to our notice,  
 “ while treating on the subject of true Politics,  
 “ except this: That as it found its way into  
 “ civil societies, by fraud and violence, and still  
 “ subsists, in some savage countries, we ought to  
 “ shew our abhorrence of its very name; and,  
 “ as



“ as men ! as Christians ! and as free-born  
“ Britons ! to fix an indelible mark of infamy,  
“ on all arbitrary power whatever.”

The proofs of this proposition will arise out of the investigation of the origin and general prevalence of limited monarchy, in the early ages of the world ; for if we plainly demonstrate, that this was the only kind of monarchy that ever obtained amongst mankind, by the consent of civil societies, the truth of the assertion, that absolute monarchy is tyranny will stand confessed.

Pufendorf mentions two conventions, as necessary for the formation of civil societies.

The first, that by which each individual agrees with the whole, to form themselves into one body ; and with one common consent, to provide for their mutual safety. This convention is either absolute or conditional : if the former, whatever form of government is agreed to by the majority must be submitted to by every individual ; if the latter, no one is bound to enter into the society, unless he approves the form of government proposed to be established.

The second convention is that, by which, (after the form of government is agreed on by common consent) one or more persons are chosen, on whom the power of governing the state is conferred ; so that those who are invested with power, may be diligent in providing for the welfare and safety of the public ; and that all the  
rest

rest may promise faithful obedience to the supreme authority.

Our countryman Gordon thinks, that Pufendorf makes the first contract of much too restrained a nature; and he establishes the whole basis of government on that contract alone, whereby each particular agrees with the rest, to submit his actions to the guidance and direction of the universal assembly, provided they do so likewise; and that the ordinances of such assembly be not contrary to the dictates of the law of nature: thus, by extending the plan of Pufendorf's first contract, he justly precludes the necessity of the second.—“For,” says he, “from this source alone, may we deduce all the obligations incumbent on the members of any state; and we need not search out, either for an ordinance to regulate the form of government, or for any second convention to compel the supreme power, or magistrate, to protect the particulars; or the particulars to be faithful to the magistrate.”

From these two respectable writers, we plainly discover the fountain from which all supreme power, whether of one or more persons, originally flowed; *viz.* from the body, or general assembly of the people.

But in order to shew how very confined the supreme power was, in the infancy of civil governments, we must carry our inquiries a little further.

As the judiciary power was the sole which government had occasion for originally, and the exercise of it had, by the negligence of the young, devolved on the elders in states; so, when they found they wanted other powers and new authorities to preserve the community, no wonder if they entrusted the leading the forces, voted by the authority of the people (and which were, in truth, no other than the people themselves in arms) to the same elders; who, finding this power of a nature more easily and speedily to be executed by one out of their own body, they chose such an one; who was accountable to them in like manner, as they were responsible to their constituents. To this election of a general, do many attribute the rise not only of monarchies, but of governments.

Barbeyrac imagines, that these generals, who were first dignified with the title of kings, were the founders of government; and confesses, that their sole province was to decide causes, and to command armies: but the power of making war or peace, of negotiating treaties, and every principal branch of the legislative, federative, and executive power, was lodged in the people, or their representatives, the elders; the constituents of these generals.

But a passage from Dionysius of Halicarnassus will put the matter out of doubt, “ That  
“ limited monarchies were the only kind of re-  
“ gal

“ gal government, or rule, by one person ever  
 “ instituted, by the voluntary consent of man-  
 “ kind;” and that absolute monarchy was  
 always deemed illegal, usurped authority.

“ Originally,” says he, “ all the cities of  
 “ Greece were governed by kings; with this  
 “ difference, that these exercised not an absolute  
 “ despotic power, like the barbarians, but ac-  
 “ cording to the laws and customs of their coun-  
 “ try; so that he passed for the best king, who  
 “ most religiously observed the laws, and de-  
 “ parted the least from the customs of his coun-  
 “ try; which Homer tells us, by calling them  
 “ distributors of justice: and these kingdoms  
 “ subsisted long, being administered under fun-  
 “ damental law, and certain condition. But  
 “ some kings, having abused their trust, and  
 “ quitted the path of the law, ruled arbitrarily  
 “ and despotically; so that most of the Grecian  
 “ states grew weary of them, and revoked their  
 “ power.”

What need we more to prove, that all power  
 was vested conditionally; and that all obliga-  
 tions to rule, and to be ruled, might be dissolved  
 by the same parties that contracted them.

Limited monarchy, such as Dionysius has  
 described, we may set down as a form of govern-  
 ment founded on true political principles.

Mixed monarchy is a term made use of by  
 modern authors, to denote a particular species  
 of

of limited monarchy; we will not, therefore, enlarge on this distinction at present, but proceed to the second general form of government known in the world;

Aristocracy; a form of government, wherein the supreme, legislative, and executive power is vested in the hands of the principal members of a state, independent of the mass of the people, or of any supreme authority conferred on any single person.

Modern writers have described these principal members to be nobles and senators; but these titles of pre-eminence being derived from monarchy, we must not submit to this definition; nor will the term itself, derived from the Greek, admit of it, for it only expresses, that the best of the people command or govern: now who shall we say were the best among the people to govern a state under an aristocracy, before nobles or senators were known in the world; or whom shall we deem, in this case, the principal members of a state, in the earliest ages of antiquity? Most assuredly, those, whom the body of the people esteemed to be the most virtuous, and venerated for the possession of superior, natural, and acquired talents, adapted to rule and government. It is, therefore, highly probable, that they selected a few of the most renowned for wisdom, temperance, and a love of justice; and of these, framed an Aristocracy.

This

This kind of government is not quite so conformable to the law of nature, and of nations, as limited monarchy; but of this hereafter.

The third general species of government is,

Democracy; in which the supreme legislative, and executive power is lodged in the hands of the people; that is to say, in the majority. For where the majority of the people, either by themselves, or those they depute to represent them, have the whole power of the community, and can employ it in making and executing laws; the form of government is a perfect democracy\*.

This term is also taken from the Greek, and sufficiently describes its constitution: for it defines the government to be vested in the people.

Great pains have been taken, by the advocates for this form of government, to prove its antiquity; making it even prior to monarchy, by alledging, that the first image of civil society was traced in democratic societies, or families. This dispute is merely speculative; it being of no kind of importance to mankind, at present, what form of government is most ancient.

The grand question is, which is the best? And in the discussion of this point, I have indeed set myself an arduous task—for I have the free opinions, and the prejudices of the living and

\* See Arbuthnot, Temple, and Locke, on Government.



the dead to combat ; with this mortifying circumstance, as the result of all my assiduity, “ That it is impossible to give universal satisfaction ;” which all should aim at, who presume to make the public, at once, their judges and their patrons.

But by the principles of the law of nature, and of nations, which are calculated to promote the welfare and happiness of mankind in society, they must be fairly tried ; and that, in which they are most likely to be religiously observed, and allowance being made for the frailties of human nature, in which they are the least deviated from, must merit the preference, in defiance of private partiality. The public good, as it is the supreme law, ought also to be the supreme rule of judgment.—“ The state demands it ; it “ is therefore the will of our Common Father ; “ and ought to preclude every idle prejudice of “ a partial education, and the locality of situation.”

## LECTURE V.

## ANALYSIS OF THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF MONARCHY, ARISTOCRACY, AND DEMOCRACY.

ABSOLUTE monarchy, we have seen, is inconsistent with civil society, and therefore it can be no form of civil government; which is intended to remedy the inconveniencies of a state of nature.

Montesquieu says, Despotism is aptly figured in the conduct of the savages of Louisiana, who, to gather the fruit, cut down the trees that bear it. We imagine, therefore, we shall not meet with any advocates for this usurpation on the rights of mankind, except such as do not merit our notice: the sycophants of corrupt courts.

“Sovereignty,” says Burlamaqui, “always supposes a beneficent power: we must indeed make some allowances for the weakness inseparable from humanity; but beyond that, and when the people are reduced to the last extremity, there is no difference between tyranny and robbery. The one gives no more right than the other; and we may lawfully oppose force to violence.”

“ Men have established civil society and government for their own good ; to extricate themselves from troubles, and to be rescued from the evils of a state of nature. But it is highly evident, that if the people were obliged to suffer every oppression from their sovereigns, and never to resist their encroachments, this would be reducing them to a far more deplorable state, than that which they intended to avoid by the institution of sovereignty.”

*Burlamaqui's Political Law.*

To a limited monarchy, in which the power of the sovereign is only restrained from becoming absolute, by the original compact between him and his subjects, but in which there is no mixture of aristocratic or democratic principles, a variety of objections are made; drawn both from the nature of such government, and from the experience of its inconveniencies, found in history.

The first is, the difficulty of preserving the balance of power between the prince and the people, from their perpetual jealousy of each other.—The prince and his courtiers construing every inquiry into their conduct to be factious and seditious ; and the people, deeming the exertions of the prince's prerogatives so many advances or strides towards arbitrary power : now, the consequences of this struggle between them, in nations where the people have not reserved to themselves

themselves the power of making, amending, and repealing the laws, for their government, are, tumults, insurrections, rebellions, and revolts, on the part of the people; and either a violent, or corrupt administration, on the part of the prince.

Secondly, It is objected, that the splendor, pomp, and magnificence, attending the regal state, intoxicates the mind of the possessor; allures him to a life of luxury and indolence, and disposes him to divest himself of the painful cares of government, which he generally consigns to the conduct of ministers, who are his devoted slaves.

Thus an inferior species of despotism takes place; and the people are too often oppressed and enslaved; having no power reserved to oppose against the united force of the monarch and his ministers; who are the fountains of honour, and dispensers of favours, by means whereof they can corrupt the leaders of the people, and buy those over to their party, who ought to stand in the gap, and defend the just rights of the people, as strenuously as the courtiers support the prerogatives of the prince, on whom they immediately depend.

If by means then, of a multitude of dignities, and offices of trust and emolument, a prince can secure to himself such a party in his dominions, that, though he stands engaged by solemn com-

pact to govern according to fundamental maxims and established laws, he may dispense with them at pleasure, being sure of protection and support against the rage of his subjects, from his dependent servants ; it is evident that the grand end of the law of nature in the institution of civil government is defeated : “ for the freedom of the “ individual will not be secured by the wisdom “ and integrity of the community :” on the contrary, his civil liberty and his property will be subject to encroachments, as dangerous in their tendency, though perhaps not so rapid and violent as in a state of despotism ; to which all limited monarchies decline, that have not a mixture of democracy in their limitation. These being the strongest arguments against this form of government, it is needless to add others of less note.

To aristocracy, numberless objections arise, which plainly prove, that it is not a free form of government ; but two or three will be sufficient to shew that it cannot be the best.

A contention for power has been the bane of aristocratic governments ; and though the abilities and assiduity of many seem to be combined for the public service, yet the tie of common interest is not strong enough to resist the violence of private feuds and animosities, which never fail to break out in such constitutions.

When the government is lodged entirely in the hands of the nobles, or chief families of a country, and they are accountable only to their own body, it is evident, that the rest of the people, having no power of redress by appeal, cannot have so much as the shadow of civil liberty; their persons and property being at the disposal of the arbitrary nobles, who make what laws they please: and therefore, such a state may be called a government of tyrants.

Montesquieu observes, that two things are to be dreaded in an aristocracy: the extreme poverty; and the exorbitant riches of the nobles. What are we to infer from either of these situations, but a cruel oppression of the people.

Aristocracy then, is by no means calculated to answer the ends of civil government, instituted on the principles of the law of nature; for an unnatural inequality takes place between man and man; and no security is given, that the subordinate part shall enjoy the civil rights and privileges, for which they surrendered their natural liberty.

Democracy, or popular government, at first sight, bids the fairest for the preference, as approaching the nearest to the state of nature, freed from its inconveniencies. Its first principle being that of equality amongst men, we are led to believe, that this form of government is the most conformable to the first plan of civil society. In perfect democracies, the power of making, altering,



altering, and repealing the laws, by which they are to be governed, is vested in the people themselves.

The elections to offices of honour, trust, and emolument, are either by free suffrage, by lot, or by rotation; and in the latter case, the frequent changes prevent the growth of exorbitant power and influence.

A spirit of moderation usually prevails in democracies; and the sole ambition is, to deserve well of the community.

Virtue and industry is the basis of education; because it lays the foundation of pre-eminence, under this form of government.

Frugality is the characteristic of a democracy; because the principle of equality destroys that of envy, the pillar of luxury.

Salutary laws must necessarily be enacted, and duly observed; because all are equally interested in their execution.

Probity must be a principle of self-love in a democracy; for to defraud the state, is to commit a robbery on one's-self, where the management of the public treasure is in the hands of those that formed it.

Every citizen, in a democratic state, finds it necessary to be a good subject; as that qualification is the chief ground of his title to be a ruler.

These are the boasted advantages of the democratical form of government: but they are unfortunately counterpoised by many, and very great inconveniencies.

The

The first I shall mention, is an insurmountable objection.

One of the grand principles on which civil government was first instituted—the providing for, and securing the safety of the state, against the assaults of foreign enemies, is so weakened and impeded by the slow, irresolute, discordant deliberations and councils of great assemblies, in whom is vested a supreme power in republican governments; that the danger has often proved irremediable, for the enemy has been at the door before a majority in such assemblies could be brought to agree on the necessary measures to be taken for the defence of the state: and where unanimity, or the absolute consent of the whole has been required, as in some democracies, the case has been still worse; so that, on these emergencies, republican governments have been obliged to borrow from the system of monarchy part of the regal authority; and to invest a single person with supreme power; at least for a time; till the crisis was over, in which popular government had proved defective.

The election of Dictators in the Roman commonwealth, and of Stadtholders in Holland, are sufficient proofs of what we have advanced on this head.

Another principle of the law of nature, and of nations, is evidently impaired in the internal administration of a democratic form of government; which

which is, the equal and impartial distribution of justice: an accurate attention to the mode of carrying on and determining processes, as well civil as criminal, in modern republics, will serve to convince us, that where there are such multitudes of magistrates and judges, there must be great opportunities for the introduction of venality and corruption; and for the bias of natural affection, affinity, private friendship, and interested connections.

Popular tumults are of the number of the many evils to which a democracy is subject; and by which individuals are often thrown back into a state of nature, and all the ends of civil society are totally defeated: for when anarchy prevails, the lives and properties of the weak and defenceless lie at the mercy of brutal force, and lawless power.

The facility with which the main body of the people, in a democracy, can resume their delegated authority, is the next evil; a florid speech in an assembly; a predilection in favour of particular men; a combination secretly formed, by means of bribery, or of family connections, has often been the occasion of changing or revoking the laws and the decrees of senates in republican governments; and a refusal to comply with the sudden caprices of the populace, has frequently occasioned dangerous and bloody insurrections,

furrections, and partial revolutions. I mean the removal of magistrates, and alterations in the mode of government, where they have not totally subverted it.

Licentiousness of manners is another evil of democracies, arising from too high a notion of the natural equality of mankind, and the want of a fixed veneration and respect for superiors, who govern only for a limited time, and then are reduced to a level with the mass of the people, who have been accustomed to obey them.

Many other objections might be brought against this form of government; but enough has been said to prove, that it cannot be the most eligible: for it does not, in many instances, so closely adhere to the principles of the law of nature as limited monarchy.

It might now be expected that I should close the subject, and decide that important question: which is the best form of government in the known world? But, happily for the peace and prosperity of many civilized nations, it has been long since discovered, that the three forms, of which I have given a concise analysis, are so defective, that they cannot answer the principal design of instituting civil governments.

This I shall demonstrate in a very few words; which may serve as a recapitulation of the grand objections

objections to limited monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy.

Civil liberty, the first principle upon which all wise governments are founded, has two powerful enemies in society.

1. Oppression, springing from tyranny.
2. Licentiousness, arising from popular degeneracy.

To describe these defects in the three governments more distinctly: it has been customary with political writers to stile the corruption of monarchy, Tyranny; the abuse of aristocracy, Oligarchy; and the disorders of democracy, Ochlocracy.

If then each of the forms of government we have delineated are, from the very nature of their several constitutions, liable to such defects as equally tend to the subversion of civil liberty, we most assuredly cannot give any one of them the preference to the other two. And this is the very reason, why so ancient a dispute, which has employed the pens of the ablest writers from Herodotus, the father of history, down to the latest author on the controversy, has never been decided.

It is easy to perceive, that in a limited monarchy, the sovereign has only to break through the original, simple contract between him and his people, to become a tyrant; and this he may do by means of a standing army, or a well furnished

furnished treasury, both of which are very often in the power of the sovereign of a formidable people. Oppression therefore, one of the enemies to civil liberty, may find a ready admission into limited monarchies.

In aristocracies, oligarchy, which is the bane of civil liberty, is almost unavoidable; for the unruly passions of some of the nobles or senators who compose an aristocracy, will lead them into extravagance of every kind; and prodigality engendering poverty, these will be disposed to sell their power and influence in the state, to a few opulent, bold, designing men, on condition that they shall enjoy the exclusive privilege of not feeling the weight of their oppressive government. Thus an oligarchy is formed; and this degeneracy, form a plan of government, very defective in its own nature, has been generally deemed a worse species of oppression than the tyranny of one man, which springs from monarchy.

As for democracies, the slightest reflection on the defects already stated, must convince us, that anarchy, or that kind of confusion which throws men back into the state of nature, and deprives them of all the advantages of civil liberty, is greatly to be apprehended from the facility of resuming the delegated power the multitude have conferred on their temporary magistrates. In short, as civil liberty, in democratic states, is apt to degenerate into licentiousness, though it



is enjoyed in the highest degree of perfection when that does not happen, yet it is held by so precarious a tenure that it is always on the verge of ruin. Intestine commotions, or foreign wars unsettle it; and when once the band is loosened, which holds republics together by the tie of common affection and united interests, it is their usual fate; either to fall a prey to ambitious fellow citizens, or to submit to a foreign yoke. By either of which catastrophes, they pass from the essence of liberty, to the dregs of slavery.

The rejection of the three forms of government which prevailed most generally in remote ages, and which still subsist in many parts of the world, follows of course; and we must now endeavour to establish a criterion by which we may be enabled to decide our favourite question impartially; and as I cannot do this in clearer terms, I shall take the liberty to cite a proposition of irresistible force, in the words of Burlamaqui.

“ The height of human felicity and prudence  
“ is to know how to guard against those two  
“ enemies to civil liberty, tyranny and licentiousness: the only method is to have a well  
“ constituted government, framed with such  
“ precautions as to banish licentiousness, and  
“ yet be no way introductive to tyranny.”

Let

Let us now add an amendment to our contested point; and ask—What form of government it is, that approaches the nearest to this perfection?

The resolution of this question will enable us finally to decide, which is the best system of policy now subsisting among all the different nations of the earth: regard being had to the fallibility of all human institutions.

It may be here necessary to observe, that political writers have distinguished the three forms of government of which we have been treating, by the general title of simple governments; and that no other were known till the final subversion of the Roman empire.

Soon after this great event, compound governments were introduced generally into all parts of Europe; and to one of these we are indebted for the outlines of the British constitution, to the origin and nature of which I desire your closest attention; for under this head, we shall find our main question resolved.

## LECTURE VI.

## ORIGIN OF THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION.

THE British Constitution was originally formed upon the model of the little, separate, independent governments, which subsisted among the German nations, after the dissolution of the Roman empire; and these were founded on a strict scrutiny into the advantages and disadvantages which had been experienced in each of the three general forms of government that had before prevailed in all parts of the world.

From a digest of the political laws of each, some German states framed a new form of government, being a compound of Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Democracy; which gave it originally the title of a composite system: afterwards, the Gothic nations having adopted it, writers of those days, gave it the name of the Gothic Balance; but, in modern times, it has been more universally known and understood, by its proper definition, Mixed or Regulated Monarchy.

As a more ample account of the institution and progress in Europe, of a form of government

ment to which we stand indebted for so many invaluable rights and privileges, I imagine must be highly acceptable to all the admirers and true friends of our excellent constitution, I have selected, from the best authorities, the following concise narrative of the primitive German states.

The continent of Europe has for many ages exhibited almost as many systems of government, as it contains separate states and kingdoms. The governments, which anciently prevailed in Italy, Gaul, Germany, and Spain, before those countries were conquered by the Romans, were all democratical or republican. Though the natives were not possessed of the philosophy, learning, or manners of the Greeks, yet they resembled them in their aversion to the government of a single person; for they exploded monarchy.

All the Asiatic, or eastern nations, on the contrary, appear either never to have had, or very early to have lost, all ideas of any other but despotic governments. The little political knowledge they were masters of, was not sufficient to enable them to refine on this rude, barbarous system, to which, either by consent, or compulsion, successive generations had tamely submitted.

This political contrast between the nations of Europe and Asia, cannot be accounted for in any other way, but by admitting, that the genius

and temper of mankind are regulated in a great degree by the climates ; and therefore, that they must be extremely different in the various regions of the earth ; so that physical causes must concur to produce that distinction of taste, in arts, policy, and manners, which has so generally prevailed in the world.

It should seem, that the people inhabiting the warm and soft climates of the east and south, ever prefer indolence and quiet to all other considerations ; and rather than be active in the maintenance of their natural rights, tamely submit, upon any tolerable prospect of present safety and protection, to bear the yoke of arbitrary government. Content with a small provision for their immediate wants, and more afraid of labour than of poverty, they do not arraign the authority, or conduct of their rulers ; nor are they solicitous to inquire, upon what foundation the public interest is built.

But the northern nations, bred in a sharper air, and more ungrateful soil, are rendered vigorous in body and mind, by the constant exercises of the powers of both for their subsistence ; and thus they become bold and enterprising, grasping every acquisition that may serve as a supply against want. What they gain by toil, or peril of their lives, they are anxious to secure ; and dread even the restraints of civil government, unless

unless the defence and care of the property of individuals be made the public concern.

The Greeks partook of this active and industrious spirit, though their climate was more contiguous to Asia than any other in Europe. Their soil, in many places, was not very fertile; and the whole domain they possessed, was of no great extent; besides, it was separated and divided by seas, rivers, and rugged mountains, which rendered a general intercourse extremely difficult, and naturally divided them into a number of small states; the proper nurseries of republican governments.

As they excelled other nations in all works of genius and invention, so were they equally distinguished for their love of civil liberty; which however, spread no farther into the continent of Asia, than the colonies they planted on its coasts.

This short digression was necessary to illustrate our subject; to which I now return.

When the Gothic nations extended their conquests over Europe, the officers and soldiers of their armies shared the conquered territories, as well as the chieftains. The victorious general, claimed only a larger portion of the lands, with some splendid designation for himself; while the bulk of the landed property was distributed among the captains of his troops, who retaining the use of arms, were readily arrayed to defend



it from foreign attacks; and were careful, in time of peace, to guard it, by public laws and statutes, from all domestic usurpation.

Upon this basis, arose the Gothic governments, formed, like Nature's handy-work, with amazing boldness and symmetry; the principles of the ancient policy appearing to be reversed in them; and by a combination of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, generally held to be inconsistent, a new system, partaking of the advantages of each of them, was established.

A division of the supreme power soon followed that of the property, thus shared among the several orders of the community.

The Duke, or Prince, the Peers, and, in process of time, the heads of the people, or what we now call the Representatives of the commons, composed one Legislature.

This compound system of government was brought over to England, from Germany, by the Saxons.

Thus have I given the true origin of the British Constitution; and the same may be said of us, with respect to this constitution, as is observed with regard to arts, manufactures, and commerce: "That our genius for improving  
" any design laid before us, is truly characteristic."

The

The model upon which we formed our admired system of polity, in its rough, Gothic frame, presented us the following outlines, or plan of a regular government.

Each little Germanic state consisted of a King or supreme Chief; a number of inferior chiefs; and the people, or commons in general.

In ordinary affairs, the King consulted with the chiefs, or such of them as he thought fit to call to his council; but in the great affairs of state, such as making laws, consulting about peace or war, trying of great causes, &c. the whole body of the people, at the desire of their sovereign, assembled together in arms.

The King and the Chiefs consulted together, and resolved—the People approved or disapproved—they testified approbation by the clattering of their arms—and disapprobation, by an harsh, inarticulate murmur. In the first case, the resolution of the king and of his nobles was carried into execution—in the last, it was always suspended, or totally dropt.

From hence, is derived the different words made use of in our ancient writs or summons to parliament. The Peers were summoned *ad consulendum*; the Commons, *ad consentiendum*.

The Government was principally lodged in the king; and the exercise of the government, in the King, and such of his Chiefs as he was pleased to call to his council. The Legislative

power was in the hands of the people ; and also, the power of trying and punishing the greatest offenders ; and as they had a legal and effectual method of exercising this power, in their general assemblies, it follows, that these were free governments.

This mixed form of government, prevailed almost everywhere in Europe, for many generations. But as there is no such thing as perfect stability, or uniformity to be expected in any of the affairs of mankind, so the European governments do not now bear such resemblance to one another, as they did in ancient times, or even some centuries since.

Various causes have concurred to change the political face of Europe ; to smooth, here and there, the rough features of liberty, with which it was formerly marked ; or altogether to obliterate them. The variable policy and artifices of courts ; the fluctuation of manners ; divisions about systems, political and religious ; the advancement of arts, navigation, and commerce ; the introduction of wealth and luxury, have produced many alterations.

By the influence of these and other causes, the temper and spirit of the several nations of Europe have undergone a remarkable change ; and consequently, the springs and principles of the ancient policy are generally relaxed and varied. The modern republics are, therefore,  
not

not like those of ancient Greece; formed upon principles of virtue and heroism, and regulated by them. Our absolute monarchies retain nothing more of the old Gothic system, but the nominal rank and order of nobles, together with certain constitutional forms of law and judicature. The limited ones, which have preserved the best modifications of it, and afford the fullest enjoyment of civil liberty, are exposed, by the disuse or neglect of arms, to be insulted from abroad; while the growing arts of luxury and corruption, much impair and endanger their domestic privileges.

It is not necessary, however, for my design, to run through all the various regulations and improvements of the original plan, from which we deduce our happy constitution; it is better to refer the curious to the many valuable histories of our country, now extant.

My business is, to shew, wherein the excellency of the British constitution consists; to demonstrate its superiority to all others in the known world; to prove that it is founded on the true principles of the law of nature and of nations; and that, whenever any inconveniences have arisen from it, or any violent revolutions ensued, they have been owing to a deviation from its principles; and a declination to one or other of the more imperfect forms of government already delineated.

Upon the whole, I hope to make it appear, that its real imperfections, of which it has less than any other system of polity, are such only as are inseparable from every human institution, which must partake, in some degree, of the fallibility of our nature; for, *humanum est errare.*

## LECTURE VII.

ON THE PECULIAR ADVANTAGES OF THE  
BRITISH CONSTITUTION.

**I**T is evident, from what has already been advanced, that our constitution is a form of government compounded of the democratical, aristocratical, and monarchical powers; rejecting the disadvantages, and preserving the advantages of each.

The celebrated Lord Somers, thus defines the British Monarchy, “ All that know any  
“ thing of Britain, know that the government  
“ of it is a mixed, limited monarchy, where  
“ the supreme power is divided between the  
“ king and people, i. e. the lords and commons,  
“ since he can neither raise money, nor make  
“ or annul laws without them : and those laws  
“ are a rule to both ; a common measure to him  
“ of his power, and to them of their obedience.  
“ The government is called a monarchy, because  
“ that kind is predominant in the constitution :  
“ the king having his share in the supreme  
“ power ; and the chief, executive part, or administration, is singly in him.”

Now its excellence consists in such an equal mixture of these three powers, as that no one  
of



of them shall be able to direct the other two, and by over-ruling, to destroy them: nor yet, that any two of them should unite and combine to enslave, or ruin the third.

To preserve this happy equality, is the great political business of all true patriots.

This is not to be done by any regulations that the greatest human foresight and prudence can at once contrive or establish; for as power is in its own nature unsteady, and always sinking or rising, and our constitution is compounded of three distinct powers, there always has been, and, while it endures, there always will be, a contest, more or less animated, between these three, either for superiority, or equality; which contest is so far from being a misfortune, that in this, the very life and spirit of the constitution triumphantly exists.

It is this contest, springing from mutual jealousy, that has often frustrated the dark designs of cruel tyrannic princes; of ambitious, profligate nobles; of turbulent, seditious, venal commons: and has made many a rapacious minister, and many a rebellious subject, finish his life upon a block, or in a halter.

Nor has it spared the throne itself; for, by a peculiar felicity attending the different revolutions that have happened in England, the balance, at the expence of the crown, has always been on the side of liberty; and the rights and  
privileges

privileges of the people have been but the more firmly established, in consequence of arbitrary measures, tending to subvert them.

It is on this account, that the repeated exertions of national spirit, opposed to lawless and tyrannical government, which distinguish the annals of this country, will be admired and applauded in all free nations, as long any genius for political freedom exists upon earth.

A system of government, in which the power of the prince, and the rights of the people are justly poised, has been the happy result of the patriotic struggles of our ancestors, to preserve and improve the ancient constitution of the realm. In this system, the fundamental powers of legislation, judicature, and the execution of the laws, are wisely disjointed from each other: the nobles and the commons are separate bodies, which regularly assemble, to deliberate and decide on all national and public concerns; where the voice of the nation must be heard and regarded, if the king's ministers really oppress the subjects.

Though the human imagination incessantly hunts after novelties, and visionary schemes of policy attract and flatter it more than any that ever did, or can exist in any state, yet, even with the fairest of those productions of fancy, fabricated in the studies of the learned, in different ages and countries, the British government, in its genuine purity, may be compared ;  
and

and as a model of public liberty, and sovereign authority conjoined, and guarded from excess on either part, by the strongest political limitations, it will be found to rival the best of them.

The most celebrated political writers, appear to be so sensible of this truth, that they have forsaken the old custom of devising chimerical plans of government, and instead of amusing us with schemes which are barely possible, they analyze such forms as have generally prevailed amongst mankind; and give us their opinion, which deserves the preference.

Thus in that most elaborate and universally admired work, Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws*, we find the form of the British government exactly delineated, and given as a compendium of the most exalted ideas of public freedom, and national felicity.

Such indeed is the comparative excellence of that happy constitution, which the invincible spirit of a free people has firmly established in Great Britain, that it extorts applause from the subjects of the most despotic powers; whose partiality, or fondness for the forms of government they live under, cannot restrain their admiration of ours, from breaking forth, as it were involuntarily, in their writings and conversations.

But when this political system is considered by Britons as their Birth-right, and as a splendid monument of the wisdom and integrity of their ancestors, can any study be proposed of more importance;

importance ; can any science appear of greater moment, than that of its superior dignity ; and of the ways and means by which it is to be preserved and transmitted, unimpaired, to future generations ?

No better method can be adopted to mitigate party-prejudices, to restrain and check the growth of disaffection and discontent, and to unite the minds of men in one general political creed, than a full and perfect comprehension of the peculiar advantages they enjoy from an equal mixture of sovereign authority, and popular freedom in our constitution.

The contrary opinions, and unbecoming warmth so apt to prevail in free countries, on the subject of public administration, would be converted into sober, deliberate reflection, and consistent conduct ; and no sinister views would be blended with patriotism, if our youth were early made acquainted with the principles of the policy and laws of their country.

Such a branch of education is not only connected with, but must strongly promote the love of their country, and feed the flame of undaunted valour : it will revive and support declining virtue ; and will train up a race of loyal subjects, and honest citizens, who will be able to combat the arguments, and frustrate the designs of the factious ; to remove the prejudices of the weak and ignorant ; to distinguish real from pretended

grievances ; to state the conduct and designs of those who are at the helm of government, with judgment and impartiality, in all popular assemblies ; and it will inspire them with fortitude to stand forth, at the peril of their lives, in the just defence of the religion, laws, liberty, and laudable customs of their country, when they are actually endangered by foreign enemies, or domestic oppressors.

It is with a view to these important purposes, that I have undertaken to make the science of politics, and of the British constitution, as the most material branch of it, a regular, easy, beneficial accomplishment ; and that I may not swell this Treatise to an unnecessary length, I shall only give the general principles of the constitution, leaving it to the care of the assiduous student to apply them to the history of his country, particularly of its revolutions ; and to the state of public affairs, as they pass in review before him.

Our constitution giveth to the sovereign the glorious power of commanding freemen ; and to the subjects, the satisfaction of seeing this power so lodged, that their liberties are secure ; and thus it reconcileth dominion and liberty : the latter of which can never be lost, but by the degeneracy of the people. So true is the maxim of that great statesman Lord Burleigh, minister to queen Elizabeth, “ England can hardly ever be ruined but by her own parliaments ; ” that is  
to

to say, by the representatives of the people in parliament. It follows, therefore, that the free, uncorrupt election of proper representatives, is the basis of the liberty of the people; that on this alone depends those limitations of the regal authority, which give our form of government the title of a regulated, mixed monarchy; and that herein lies its superior excellence.

The necessity of drawing the line with great accuracy between the prerogatives and obligations of the sovereign, and the rights of the people, must be so obvious, from the daily altercations, gross misrepresentations, and absurd reasonings on both, which we meet with in our public prints, that I imagine it will not be unacceptable to see these points clearly, distinctly, and impartially stated; under two separate heads; and as I shall deduce all the arguments I advance on these delicate subjects, from the principles of the constitution, I shall only give a cursory review, in this place, of the peculiar advantages we derive from the judicious choice we have made of the best maxims of the monarchical, aristocratical, and democratical forms of government.

The prerogatives, and the personal safety of the king, are secured by that wise and salutary maxim, "The king can do no wrong;" whilst the rights and privileges of the people are insured by another maxim equally wise and salutary,



tary, “ That the king’s exprefs order fhall not  
“ excufe any of his minifters, or counfellors,  
“ for acting contrary to law ; nor put a flop to,  
“ or prevent the effects of an impeachment in  
“ parliament.”

The law of nature would never fuppofe, that a father could do wrong to his own family, over whom he had indeed a more extenfive power, than is allowed to our kings ; but no command of the father, however exprefs, could excufe his family for violating the firft principle of fociability—“ That of not injuring another, in  
“ his perfon, his reputation, or his property.”

But as the prerogatives of a king are various and important, he muft of neceffity commit the exercife of fome of them, to chofen fervants, and if thefe invade the rights of his fubjects, and he protects and fcreens them from juftice ; in that cafe, it is agreeable to the law of nature, and to the laws of England, that he fhould be punifhed for this ufurpation of illegal authority—that their crimes be imputed to him—and in this fituation, he becomes as a private man ; for, having exceeded his regal prerogative, he can no longer take fhelter under the political maxim, “ That a king can do no wrong,” as he has forfeited the title, by violating the compact which confirmed it to him, and cannot thereafter be confidered as a public character.

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So in the state of nature, if a father of a family had delegated his authority to servants, who beat, or killed his children, or defrauded them of their property, and had proved so unnatural as to protect and screen such servants from the hand of justice, he would no longer have been considered as a father, but as a petty tyrant; an invader of the common rights of humanity; one, fit only to herd with the beasts of the forest, and to reside in a solitary desert; the outcast of human society!

By our having a monarchy, which though elective in point of right, is yet hereditary by custom, and not set aside, but for legal incapacities, we avoid the fatal disputes, and violent commotions, about the choice of a king, or chief governor; which often distract, and sometimes destroy, democracies, aristocracies, and elective monarchies.

By the Monarchical part of our constitution we enjoy many very delicate but important advantages.

As the executive part of our government, especially with regard to foreign affairs, is intrusted to the king only, we thereby avoid the inconveniences and dangers which flow from the openness and delays of popular councils.

In all cases of great and sudden danger, the king becomes, of course, invested with a dictatorial power; and he even dispenses with esta-

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blished laws, for the public safety. In such cases, the parliament, as soon as assembled, will certainly approve of what was prudently and necessarily done : but as this power is extremely dangerous to the constitution, and no true principle, or part of it, it is never to be exercised, but in cases of extreme necessity ; the exercise of it must not be continued a moment longer than the emergency exists that required it ; and the ministry or council advising this measure, must be responsible to parliament, for the actual necessity of the case.

Just apprehensions of an approaching famine ;  
The immediate danger of the plague ;

The discovery of a conspiracy, or rebellion  
against the king, or the state ;

The breaking out of a general conflagration ;  
and the invasion of a foreign enemy ; are the principal events, which, in the opinion of able politicians, establish the necessity of having recourse to this alarming expedient.

By the Aristocratical part of our constitution, we are secured against the ambition of our kings, as well as of private men : and the spirits of the people may be supported under the greatest misfortunes.

Our nobles, by their birth and rank, are entitled to very great privileges and pre-eminence ; they are likewise owners of large landed estates ; therefore, they are, in an especial manner,

ner, bound by honour and self-interest, to preserve our constitution; and must, upon all occasions, be extremely jealous of every step that may tend towards its overthrow; and anxious to maintain the just balance between the prerogatives of the prince, and the rights of the people: for, whenever either has preponderated, history will inform them, that the nobles have suffered both in dignity, and estate.—Witness the troubles in the reigns of King John, and of Charles I.

By their education they are, or ought to be, well versed in the science of man; in the mysteries, or hidden arcana of state affairs; and the rudiments of political wisdom: from all which favourable circumstances, it is imagined, they will always be able to make a timely discovery of every imminent danger that threatens the empire, and upon such emergencies they will exert their power and influence, as hereditary counsellors of the king, to avert the impending evil.

Equally excellent is the popular, or democratical part of our constitution; happily blended as it is with the two former. The power of the people in making their own laws, and in calling their governors, under the king, to account, is established in the most fixed and permanent manner; and it is a check upon the monarchical and aristocratical part of our constitution, which no other country can boast.

Our people are not obliged to submit to any law, which has not been approved by their representatives ; nor can any law be altered or repealed, but by their consent.

The people have a right of assembling out of parliament, to instruct their representatives ; and these again, have a power in parliament, to call the greatest subject to account ; and to prosecute his punishment even unto death. They have also the privilege to petition the king for redress of grievances ; and to remonstrate with him, on the mal-administration of public affairs : but this is a right of so delicate a nature, that it is liable to great abuse.

Decently exercised, with proper decorum, and only on important and warrantable occasions, it gives life to our laws, and social liberty to the meanest subject.

Improperly used, it gives pain to the prince, divides the nobles, obstructs the administration of government, and spreads sedition and faction among the people.

But conducted with temper, by men of sound judgment, unblemished characters, and due rank and influence ; the power of petitioning the throne to remove evil counsellors, and of impeaching great men in high offices, has been deemed an equal security both to the king and the people.

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The most effectual method however, of exercising the fundamental right of calling the king's ministers to account, is by impeachment in parliament: and indeed, sufficient matters for impeachment ought to be in readiness, attended with proper evidence to support the articles of accusation, before a petition or remonstrance is carried up to the throne; for if, after a rejection of such applications to the king, which cannot fail of being very disagreeable, because they arraign his judgment in the choice of his servants, no articles of impeachment are presented to parliament, it gives room to imagine that the prayer of petitions and remonstrances is not founded on facts, but on ill-grounded murmurs of the people, and ambitious or selfish views of party-leaders. It is in vain to urge that ministerial influence will prevail in parliament, when petitions and remonstrances are not favourably answered: this can be no argument against the exhibition of articles of impeachment of guilty ministers; for though they should be rejected, or the criminal be acquitted by court-interest, yet the charges would stand on record against them, in an authentic manner; and their opponents would be incontestibly justified in the opinions of all honest men.

The democratical, or most beneficial part of our constitution, depends entirely on the free choice of the representatives of the people: free, uninfluenced, unbought elections, are its



only security. For, if no selfish view predominates, the people of England have the good sense to know, that it is necessary for the security of their lives and fortunes, to chuse men of integrity and abilities. If however, bribery, in any form or shape prevails, let the people remember, that their balance in the constitution is overset by themselves; and they have no reason to complain of the constitution itself, nor of the conduct of their representatives, be it ever so repugnant to the good of their country.

To avoid every undue influence at elections, various methods have been proposed, but none adopted: the mode of election by ballot, has often been strongly recommended, and as warmly opposed; but with no sufficient weight of argument, to counterbalance the expediency of such a disinterested, candid mode of election: and it is still the more surprising that it is not adopted, in a case wherein the public welfare is so deeply concerned; when, at the same time, it is recommended and practised upon various occasions of less moment, as the only means of procuring impartial votes. As it has been adopted in part, by the House of Commons in chusing committees to try contested elections, it appears paradoxical that the practice is not extended to the first elections. The freeholders, or other qualified voters would by this mode be freed from all apprehensions from their landlords,

lords, and other superiors, on whom they are dependent.

The liberty of the press is another invaluable privilege, demonstrative of the excellency of our constitution.

The freedom with which people publish their sentiments on public men and measures is a great curb to ambitious and corrupt ministers; and has most assuredly been the means, more than once, of preserving the constitution of the kingdom.

This sacred right is secured to us, by another; for as it frequently happens, that false zeal, erroneous opinions, or selfish views may induce men to abuse the liberty of the press, and to turn libellers; and on the other hand, weak and wicked ministers may commence criminal prosecutions against those, who dare to arraign their conduct in print, the laws of our country have provided the just means of punishing the guilty, and of protecting the innocent.

No man can be legally tried for this, or indeed any other offence, but by a jury of his peers, or equals.

The equal distribution of justice, prescribed by the laws of England, which pay no personal regard to any man, is another perfection derived from the right of free representation, and the power vested in the people to make their own laws.

So little is this great benefit attended to, that very few, except those who have travelled Europe, perceive the value of it. Yet it is a certain truth, that under all other governments, the laws partially favour persons of high rank; and, by certain privileges annexed to their birth and titles, screen them from, or mitigate their punishment, when they oppress and injure the common people.

Little more need be urged to convince my countrymen, of the preference justly due to our constitution, beyond all others in the habitable world: but it would be almost unpardonable not to mention the habeas corpus act; as this grand bulwark of the personal liberty of every individual in the realm, is peculiar to Great Britain, and is of itself sufficient to justify our opinion, “that the form of government we live under  
“is the best calculated to answer the great end  
“of the institution of civil societies; to provide  
“for the security, ease, and prosperity of every  
“individual, by the power, wisdom, and equity  
“of the state.”

I shall therefore, proceed to the next thing proposed; which was to ascertain, from the principles of the constitution, the prerogatives and obligations of a king of Great Britain.

## LECTURE VIII.

ON THE PREROGATIVES AND OBLIGATIONS OF  
THE KINGS OF GREAT BRITAIN.

IN all our enquiries concerning the best constituted and most perfect form of government, or which is the most excellent of all national settlements, there are three things that demand our particular and chief attention :

1. Authority,
2. Law,
3. Liberty ;

For those governments undoubtedly deserve the preference, wherein justice and liberty are firmly maintained and supported, by the strength of a well regulated authority.

These three grand pillars of all wise governments, are so regularly disposed in the British constitution, that were no attempt made to displace them, they would uphold the most noble edifice that was ever reared, the most splendid monument of human genius that was ever exhibited, till the final dissolution of all things.

But unhappily, the ambition, or imbecility of the princes who have swayed the sceptre of the  
British

British empire, and the licentiousness of the people, have alternately impaired the pillars of the constitution; and sometimes have shaken the whole stately fabric to its very foundation.

Convulsions of the latter kind have been lately felt; and some symptoms of this political disease still remain, but are neither so frequent, nor so violent; perhaps an impartial analysis of the prerogatives and obligations of British sovereigns, and of the rights, privileges, and duties of British subjects, may contribute to allay the heat of misguided popular zeal, on the one hand; and to cool the ardour for extending ministerial power, on the other.

These, at least, are the honest views of the author: animated by the love of his country, and regardless of all other applause, but that which virtue and honour may freely accept; and which none but the truly just and good can bestow.

To mark the bounds of authority on an exact map of our constitution, to ascertain the lawful prerogatives of the sovereign, and to balance the scales of justice, are the objects of this division of his Lectures on the Elements of Politics; and to fix the standard of civil liberty shall be no less his care, in the next.

In describing the prerogatives and authority of the crown, it will be necessary to make a distinction between that power which is vested personally

personally in the crown, by the true principles of the constitution ; and that which ministers have from time to time acquired, and extended ; in order to strengthen their deputed authority.

The first, we shall find to be the lawful regal power of the crown :

The last, its ministerial executive government.

The exercise of the first, tends to the preservation of our happy form of government, in its genuine purity.

The undue influence of the last, to its decline, and final dissolution.

From the ancient histories and law tracts of this kingdom, it appears, that the power of the crown did not formerly consist, so much, in the naming of all the officers employed in the executive departments of government, as in the commanding and directing them, after they were named by the people ; and this is certainly most agreeable to that maxim of our constitution, which supposes that “ the king can do no wrong ;” because if the king’s orders are contrary to law, it is the duty of the officer to whom they are directed to inform him thereof ; and he not only may, but ought to refuse to execute them ; and if, in such cases, he neglects, through indolence, fear, or venality, to give the king proper advice ; for if he executes any improper orders, it is not the king, but the officer,



who, by this salutary maxim, “ does the wrong;” and he only is accountable for it.

The intention of this political rule certainly is, to put it out of the power of the king to do wrong; and to prevent him from obtaining the execution of arbitrary, illegal commands. It should seem, however, that this design cannot be answered, unless the inferior officers of state are nominated either by the people, or by the regal power of the crown: for when men are appointed to them by ministerial authority, that is to say, by one or two chief ministers and favourites, it is greatly to be presumed, that they will chuse only such men, amongst their own friends and dependants, as shall be fit to carry into execution, any ministerial plans whatever.

Our ancestors, duly sensible of this truth, vested in the crown only the right of nominating the chief officers of state; while they reserved to themselves the privilege of electing all of inferior rank.

“ The present ministerial power of the crown,  
 “ in giving places, pensions, and reversionary  
 “ grants, in the degree and manner, and to  
 “ the persons in which, and upon whom, they  
 “ are every day lavishly bestowed, is not an  
 “ inherent original right of the crown but a  
 “ manifest abuse of part of the royal preroga-  
 “ tive, and subversive of the principles of the  
 “ constitution: if some effectual means be not  
 “ made

“ made use of to restrain this power, and reform  
“ its abuses, it must end in the destruction of  
“ liberty, and the establishment of despo-  
“ tism \*.”

Having thus drawn the line between the regal and ministerial power of the crown, in one instance; to illustrate my present subject, I shall proceed to ascertain the inviolable, indispensable, regal prerogatives, which no time, or circumstance can alter, because they are a part of the constitution itself, and all the subjects of the realm are bound to maintain them; for they are essential to sovereignty. I shall place them in the most natural order in which they follow and are dependent on each other, without regard to precedents.

The first regal prerogative of the crown, respects religion. The British constitution has wisely lodged the supremacy of all ecclesiastical concerns in the king; who is therefore stiled the supreme head of the church; and though he cannot prescribe any particular religion or alter that which is established by law, yet it is his undoubted prerogative to superintend the national religion, to determine all ecclesiastical causes in person, or by his substitutes, and to nominate all the superior officers of the church of England,

\* Thoughts on the Constitutional Power and Right of the Crown, in the Bestowal of Places and Pensions. London, printed for G. Kearsly, 1772.

as archbishops, bishops, &c. He has likewise a right to command a due observance of the principal duties of the Christian religion; and a regular administration of its sacraments, and ordinances.

The second prerogative of the crown, regards the laws of the country, for the good government of the people, in their domestic concerns.

Though the king of Great Britain cannot enact laws by his own authority, he has a right to recommend such as appear to him to be salutary; and accordingly, we find him exercising this prerogative in his speeches from the throne, and by messages during the sessions of parliament. That, which recommended the bill for better regulating the future marriages of the royal family, now passed into a law, is the most recent example we have of the use and exercise of this prerogative; and is sufficient to remind us, that all laws do not originate in the two houses of parliament; some being suggested by the crown.

The third prerogative is the right of putting a negative on proposed laws, after they have been carried through both houses; by which the king, though not invested, strictly speaking, with a legislative power, has a right very nearly allied to it; for, by virtue of his regal authority, he can prevent the enacting of any new laws, if they appear to be detrimental to himself,

himself, or his people; and it must be mentioned, to the honour of the sovereigns of the house of Hanover, that they have never abused this great prerogative, by withholding the royal assent from any proposed law for the benefit of their subjects.

The fourth prerogative inherent in the crown is, the execution of the laws ; in virtue of which right, the king appoints the judges, high sheriffs, justices of the peace, and other civil magistrates ; with this exception, where the right of electing some magistrates has been vested by any of his royal predecessors in corporations, by charters, since confirmed to them by acts of parliament ; in this case, the elections to magistracy are popular, the citizens qualified by the laws of the corporation being the rightful electors of their own officers. Thus the lord mayor, aldermen, recorder, and sheriffs of London, are chosen by the livery of the said city.

“ But though the judges of the land are  
“ chosen by the king, by the advice of his  
“ council,” says the great Lord Somers, by  
18 Edw. III. c. 1. “ they are so far from  
“ depending upon the will of the king, that  
“ they swear faithfully to serve the people as  
“ well as the king ; and to do justice to every  
“ man, according to the law of the land, not-  
“ withstanding any writs, letters, or commands  
“ received from him ; and in default thereof,  
“ they are to forfeit their bodies, lands and goods,  
“ as’

“ as in cases of treason. Queen Elizabeth, and  
 “ her counsellors, pressed the judges very hard  
 “ to obey the patent under her great seal, in the  
 “ case of Cavendish; but they answered, that  
 “ both she and they had taken oath to keep the  
 “ law; and if they should obey her commands,  
 “ the law would not warrant them \*.”

The fifth regal prerogative is, a power of equity vested in the crown, in order to abate the severity of laws; for, if extremities in contracts, and penalties in penal laws, should be carried to the utmost rigour they would bear by the letter of them, the most wholesome laws might be converted to the worst of purposes; to favour subtilty, law-chicanery, oppression, and cruelty. Our kings exercise this equitable prerogative by their chancellors; who, on account of this great and important power delegated to them by the throne, are stiled lord high chancellors †. Keepers of the King’s conscience.

The sixth is, a power to pardon the breach of criminal laws; this prerogative is stiled, by various writers, the brightest jewel of the crown; and it must be so esteemed by every humane

\* See the judgment of whole kingdoms and nations, concerning the rights, power, and prerogatives of kings; and the rights, privileges, and properties of the people; by Lord Somers. London, 1713; reprinted for J. Williams, 1771.

† The chancellor hath power to moderate and temper the written law, and subjecteth himself only to the law of nature and conscience. *Cowel.*

prince,

prince, because it is a personal exercise of mercy, which often spares the life of a penitent criminal, and restores him to the community ; it likewise inspires love and veneration for the sovereign, when it is exercised with discretion and impartiality, as we have experienced in our own time.

The seventh is, a right to enforce pecuniary penalties, incurred by violations of the penal laws ; and this power is exercised by the officers of his majesty's court of exchequer ; into which all penalties, though levied by justices of the peace, and other inferior magistrates, are returnable.

The eighth is, the prerogative of coining money, to be the current medium of the exchanges of commodities, in our mutual intercourses with each other. The precious metals and copper, being stamped with the royal portrait, are made equal to the nominal value affixed, on all the necessaries of life, and on all articles of trade. This is reputed, by many authors, to be the strongest mark of supreme power that can be given ; because it includes a right, upon extraordinary conjunctures, of lowering the standard of the current coin, so as to make it inferior to its nominal value. When this is done, the coin of a kingdom is only serviceable at home ; and as it will not pass out of the kingdom, such a measure must prove highly detrimental



detrimental to a commercial nation. Again let it be observed, that this prerogative has never been abused, since the accession of the illustrious house of Hanover.

The ninth is, a power to call together, and to dissolve all national assemblies and synods, or convocations. This prerogative has been so clearly made known by petitions and remonstrances from many parts of the kingdom, for the dissolution of a parliament in the year 1770, and by the repeated refusals of the king, to exercise this prerogative, in compliance with the prayers of these petitions, that nothing more need be added on so public a topic of common conversation.

The tenth is, a power to create nobility, and to confer all titles of honour and distinction, (those of magistracy in corporate towns excepted), for the king is the fountain of all honour within his realm; and none of his subjects have a right to claim any title by birth, but what his ancestors have obtained or derived originally from the crown: and on the strength of this prerogative, I must affirm, that no subject of Great Britain can assume any title, or wear any badge of honour conferred on him by foreign potentates, unless by express permission from the king, while he remains within his dominions.

The eleventh royal prerogative, is the right of entering into negotiations and treaties; of  
declaring

declaring war, and of making peace with foreign powers, by and with the advice of his council; this is a right so essential to monarchy, that it cannot subsist without it. Princes act a prudent part, when they consult the inclinations and general interests of their people, in affairs of such infinite consequence; but they cannot call this right in question; all that the people of England, the freest country on earth, can do, is to impeach the king's ministers in parliament, if they have advised him to sign dishonourable treaties of peace, or to involve his subjects in unnecessary, or unjustifiable wars.

Lastly, it is the king's prerogative to appoint his own ambassadors, and all other persons whom he thinks proper to invest with public characters, in foreign nations; where they represent him, in the same manner as he represents his people, in the eyes of foreign potentates.

These are all the essential prerogatives of a king of Great Britain that I have been able to collect, from a careful review of the best authorities; and there can be no manner of doubt, that the people are bound to support and defend them, with as much zeal and integrity as they are to guard the municipal laws of the land, constituted for their peculiar benefit and protection.

But there are ministerial powers derived from the crown, which may be exercised in such

a manner as to tarnish the lustre of our excellent constitution.

A little reflection will soon convince every impartial man in the kingdom, that an extensive power, unknown to the constitution, has imperceptibly stolen upon us, and established itself in a manner equally derogatory to the regal prerogative, and to the rights of the people. Whether this power is exercised by good or bad men, is a matter foreign to the purpose: the truth is, that no such usurped authority ought to subsist; and a comparative view of the system of administration in former times, with that of our days, will serve to demonstrate, that the dignity of the crown, and the just rights of the subject, were more firmly maintained and secured, before this innovation in the management of public affairs took place.

That we may be enabled to trace the origin of this national evil, it will be necessary to explain the nature of the duties of those principal state officers,

The first lord of the treasury; and

The first secretary of state.

My reason for taking this method, must be obvious to all who are conversant in state affairs; for they will readily acknowledge that the ministerial power of the crown, which I mean to explode, has been usually exercised by one or other of these officers, though most frequently

by the first. To render this observation quite simple, permit me to mention, that during the administration of the late Earl of Chatham, this power was vested in him as first secretary of state; it has since resumed its usual situation; and now actually resides with the first lord of the treasury.

The office of lord treasurer, now executed by commissioners, is to take the care and charge of all the public treasure in the exchequer; to issue all sums voted by parliament for public uses; to see that the national accounts are properly stated, so as to be laid before parliament when called for; to give in an annual estimate to parliament, of the supplies requisite for the ordinary services of the current year, in time of peace; which is called, the peace-establishment; comprehending all the expences of the civil and military establishments in Great Britain and her colonies: in time of war, he extends this estimate to the extra-supplies that may be requisite for carrying on its extensive operations; and these cannot be calculated with such certainty as the peace-establishment. It has been frequently the custom, of late years, for parliament to grant a vote of credit to the king, by which the first lord of the treasury might be enabled to raise an extraordinary sum, to be applied, on any unforeseen emergency, during the recess of parliament, to the public service. It also falls to the lot of this officer, or the

chancellor of the exchequer, (an inferior officer under his controul) to propose to parliament the means of raising these national supplies: besides these powers, he sometimes unites, in his own person, the two offices of first lord of the treasury, and chancellor of the exchequer.

If the first lord of the treasury is a commoner, he usually holds both posts; but if he is a peer of the realm he cannot, because the chancellor of the exchequer must be a commoner.—Mr. Pitt, being a member of the house of commons, occupies both. The Marquis of Lansdowne, the last peer who held the office of first lord of the treasury, had Mr. Pitt as his co-adjutor; that gentleman being then only chancellor of the exchequer.

All the offices of the customs and excise are in his gift and disposal; and the officers themselves are all subject to his check and controul: he nominates escheators in every county; and grants leases of all lands belonging to the crown. This is the utmost extent of his authority at the present hour; a great part of which is of modern date, having been acquired by the misfortunes of the state, which have given birth to a swarm of revenue officers, who have extended the ministerial influence of the first lord of the treasury so far, that this officer is now generally considered as the prime minister of Great Britain; for he exercises a plenary power equal to  
that

that of the first minister in other countries; though he should not assume a title not warranted by our constitution, and which some years past, no printer, nor publisher, would have presumed to give him—"The ministry, and not the minister, was then the language of the times."

Hitherto, I have been silent concerning the division of the office of lord high-treasurer; and from what I have already advanced, many sensible people may imagine it unnecessary, to mention those nominal officers, the other commissioners, for they only multiply the number of dependants, without lessening the authority of the sole manager. But as some may be inclined to dispute this point, I must be permitted to introduce an anecdote, well authenticated, to put the matter out of doubt.

"A certain first lord of the treasury, since deceased, once proposed a measure to the board, which was immediately opposed by one of his colleagues: the minister resented the opposition, and intimated that his adversary had no right to dispute his pleasure—"Then," said the objecting lord, "what do I sit here for?—"To intitle you to receive 1600*l.* *per annum,*" replied the minister."

That this must always be the case, no man will deny, who reflects that it is in the minister's power instantly to deprive his colleague of this fine income. He has only to inform the king,



that his measures are disconcerted—that one of his colleagues will not draw with him—that it is impossible his majesty's service should be carried on, “if those who eat his majesty's bread, oppose his measures;” and if the minister has his royal master's confidence, it is very easy to perceive that the colleague will be dismissed.

But great as this officer appears to be, on a review of the ancient privileges of his station, he neither had, nor ought to have, by virtue of his office, any exclusive influence in raising, or any power whatever of appropriating the public money. His business is only to issue it, under the authority of legal warrants for that purpose: and so jealous have the people formerly been of the assumption of such a power, that we have many instances in our history, of treasurers being called to account for sums wantonly and profusely applied, though issued under the sovereign's direction.

But an additional ministerial power has (in past, but modern times) been exercised, by applying public monies to secret services; and no specific account having been demanded in parliament, through the parliamentary influence of the first lord of the treasury, the nation has been obliged to content itself with general accounts of the application of gross sums to secret services.

By

By means then of a skilful appropriation of the public money to such unknown services, and of the number of places, increased ten fold with the increase of taxes, (a subject which shall be discussed at large, in the Lectures on the Elements of Finances), the first lord of the treasury has been enabled to extend his influence so as to claim the chief, if not, occasionally, the sole administration of public affairs at home and abroad. Now this is contrary to the spirit of our constitution; subversive of its balance, and tends to the destruction of the peace of mind of both the king and his subjects: for every great and good action an artful minister will attribute to himself; and all unconstitutional, or unpopular measures, he will make to recoil on his royal master.

It is therefore a matter of great importance to trace the origin of this political innovation: but first, let us consider attentively, the nature of the office of secretary of state; since we have observed, that the ministerial power of the crown has occasionally been vested in this department.

The office of secretary of state, was executed by one person, till towards the end of the reign of Henry VIII; at which time it was divided between two: they were both held to have equal authority; and were therefore severally stiled, "principal secretaries of state." The  
correspondence

correspondence with all parts of Great Britain was reckoned a joint concern; but with regard to foreign affairs, their offices were divided into two distinct departments—the northern and the southern—by which arrangement, the ministers at the courts of foreign princes, and those residing with us in public characters, from foreign nations, knew to which department, the correspondence and concerns of their respective countries were to be addressed. The southern department was the post of most eminence; the line of promotion running from the south to the north. The senior secretary, in point of nomination, had the southern; and the junior, or last appointed, the northern.

The secretaries of state have a power, as magistrates, to commit persons (by special, but not by general warrants) for treason, and other offences against the state. In their hands, the petitions and requests of private subjects are frequently, and very properly lodged, to be presented to the king; and from them, answers may be expected officially from his majesty. One of them is supposed always to attend the court; and, by the king's warrant, to prepare all dispatches, commissions, letters, and other writings, not being matters of law, for the king to sign. The office called the paper office, which contains all the state-papers, such as negotiations, treaties, correspondence with foreign ministers; commissions,

commissions, and instructions to governors, &c. in short, all matters of state and council, properly appertain to these departments.

They, as well as the first lord of the treasury, are privy counsellors; and a council is seldom, if ever, held without the presence of one of them.

So far the original powers of the secretaries of state accord with those now exercised by these officers: but it has happened of late years, and especially in time of war, that an enterprising, popular man, being vested with the office of principal secretary of state, has been able, from the “existing circumstances” of the nation, to monopolize the ministerial power of the crown, and to make even the first lord of the treasury act as his second. We must, therefore, blend these officers together, in our proposed inquiry into the origin and progress of the ministerial power of the crown.

This irregular authority, so often assumed, and so constantly exercised with a high hand, is thus accounted for, in an excellent little pamphlet, the author unknown\*.—“Certain great  
“ officers of state, such as the secretaries, the  
“ first lord of the treasury, &c. by reason of  
“ their places, being more immediately about the  
“ throne, naturally received applications from

\* Ministerial Usurpation displayed.—London, printed for J. Griffiths, 1760.

“ such

“ such as were candidates for preferment in the  
“ disposal of the crown ; and when it was found  
“ that their recommendations or importunities  
“ were passports to promotion, the ambitious  
“ and necessitous, as naturally attached them-  
“ selves to the persons who held those offices,  
“ and implicitly espoused their interests ; by  
“ which means they enabled them, at length, to  
“ gain an ascendancy over the king and people :  
“ for these ministers feeling their own strength,  
“ and finding that nothing could be granted but  
“ through their intercession, began to dictate  
“ both to the crown and to parliament, and to  
“ assume an extraordinary influence in the ad-  
“ ministration, which our constitution does not  
“ authorize.

“ The history of England affords us melan-  
“ choly instances of revolutions occasioned by  
“ this undue influence ; and whenever it is  
“ exerted, it will always administer occasion for  
“ those discontents which sometimes burst forth  
“ into all the rage of civil commotion. The  
“ constitution may, by chance, recover from  
“ such violent shocks ; but it sometimes (as did  
“ ours in the seventeenth century) perishes in  
“ the struggle.”

If ministers were to confine themselves within  
their constitutional sphere of duty, their offices  
would not be such objects of envy ; nor would  
the moderate power, which they might legally  
exercise,



exercise, provoke such furious oppositions as we have seen of late years.

But should any minister claim the power of nominating and creating the other great officers of state, under the pretext that “ he cannot “ carry on the king’s business without the aid “ and support of his own friends, or the dis- “ mission of an opposing colleague, in office,” contention will be kept alive; and troublesome times, will be the result.

But if the obligations which a king of Great Britain enters into when he ascends the throne, are duly performed, we shall find in one of them, the proper remedy for this political evil.

In the discussion of a point so delicate as that of the duty of sovereigns, it is impossible to be too much upon one’s guard; for the eyes and ears of the numerous dependants on courts are open to observe, and to scrutinize with extreme minuteness and rigour, every disagreeable sentiment or expression, though founded on maxims of truth, virtue, and honour. Besides, presumption and arrogance will be instantly laid to the charge of every private subject, who boldly dares to tell a king—what he owes to his people. Others there are, who might be inclined to pass over this part of my subject, without deigning to give it a perusal, if they thought the reasoning entirely my own. To prevent, therefore, unjust criticisms on the one hand, and supercilious neglect



neglect on the other, I will ingenuously acknowledge, that in what I advance relative to the reciprocal obligations, or commerce of duties, subsisting between sovereigns and their subjects, I follow, almost step by step, those respectable authorities. Pufendorf and Burlamaqui; deviating only from their maxims, where I have found them incompatible with the limitations of the British monarchy, or the political freedom of British subjects.

The higher a sovereign is raised above the level of other men, the more important are his duties: if he can do a great deal of good, he can also do a great deal of mischief. It is on the good or evil conduct of princes, that the happiness or misery of a whole nation depends. How happy is the situation, which, in all instances, furnishes occasions of doing good to millions of subjects! But, at the same time, how dangerous is the post, which exposes him, every moment, to the injuring of millions! This sufficiently discovers the importance of their duties.

1. The first general duty of princes, is carefully to inform themselves of every thing that falls under the complete discharge of their trust: for a person cannot well acquit himself in that which he has not rightly learnt.

It is a great mistake to imagine, that the knowledge of government is an easy affair; on the contrary, nothing is more difficult, when princes discharge their duty. Whatever talents, or  
genius

genius they may have received from nature, this is an employment that requires the whole man. The general rules of governing well, are few in number; but the difficulty is, to make a just application of them to times and circumstances: and this demands the greatest efforts of diligence and human prudence.

2. When a prince is once convinced of the obligation he is under to inform himself exactly of all that is necessary for the discharge of his trust, and of the difficulty of getting this information, he will begin with removing every obstacle which may oppose it.—And first, it is absolutely necessary, that princes should retrench their pleasures, and useless diversions: so far as they may be a hinderance to the knowledge and practice of their duty. Then, they ought to endeavour to have wise, prudent, and experienced persons about them; and, on the contrary to remove flatterers, buffoons, and others, whose whole merit consists in things that are frivolous and unworthy the attention of a sovereign. Princes ought not to choose for favourites, those who are most proper to divert them; but such as are most capable of governing the state.

Above all things, they cannot guard too much against flattery. No human condition has so great an occasion for true and faithful advice, as that of kings: and yet princes, corrupted by flattery, take every thing that is free and ingenuous,

nuous, to be harsh and arrogant. They are in some countries so delicate, that every thing, which is not adulation, offends them. But of nothing ought they to be so greatly afraid, as this very adulation; since there are no miseries into which they may not be hurried by its poisonous insinuations. On the contrary, that prince is happy, who has about his person, men who will not conceal, but speak the truth, particularly in times of public calamity; such men are the pillars of the state. Prudent sovereigns, who have their true interests at heart, ought continually to imagine that court-sycophants only regard themselves, and not their master; whereas a sincere counsellor, as it were, forgets himself, and thinks only on the advantage of his master.

3. Princes ought to use all possible application to understand the constitution of the state, and the natural temper of their subjects. They ought not, in this respect, to be contented with a general and superficial knowledge. They should enter into particulars; and carefully examine into the constitution of the state, into its establishment and power, whether it be old, or of late date; successive, or elective; acquired by legal methods, or by arms; they should also see how far their jurisdiction reaches; what neighbours are about them; what allies; and what strength, and what conveniences the state is provided

vided with : for, according to these considerations, the sceptre must be swayed.

4. Sovereigns ought also to endeavour to excel in such virtues as are most necessary to support the weight of so important a charge ; and to regulate their outward behaviour, in a manner worthy their rank and dignity.

Virtue, in general, consists in that strength of mind, which enables us not only to consult right reason, on all occasions, but also to follow her counsels with ease ; and effectually to resist every thing capable of giving us a contrary bias. This single idea of virtue is sufficient to shew how necessary it is to all men.

But none have more duties to fulfil, none are more exposed to temptations than sovereigns ; and none, of course, have a greater necessity for the assistance of virtue. Besides, virtue in princes has this advantage ; that it is the surest method of inspiring their subjects with the like principle. For this purpose, they need only shew the way.

The example of the prince has a greater force than the law. It is, as it were, a living law ; of more efficacy than precept. But to descend to particulars :

The virtues most necessary to sovereigns are first, Piety, which is certainly the foundation of all other virtues ; but it must be a solid and rational piety, free from superstition, or hypocrisy.

In the high situation of sovereigns, the only motive, which can most surely induce them to the discharge of their duty, is the fear of God. Without that, they will give way to their passions, and the people will become the victims of their ambition, avarice, and cruelty.

On the contrary, we may expect every thing that is good from a prince, who fears and respects God, as the supreme Being on whom he depends, and to whom he must one day give an account of his administration. Nothing can be so powerful a motive as this to engage princes to perform their duty; nothing can so well cure them of that dangerous mistake; that, being above other men, they may act as absolute lords and as if they were not to render an account of their conduct; and be judged in their turn, after having passed sentence on others.

Secondly, The love of equity and justice. The principal end a prince was made for, is to take care that every one should have his right. This ought to engage him to study not only the science of those great civilians who ascend to the first principles of law, which regulate human society, and are the basis, as it were, of government and politics; but also, that part of the law, which descends to the affairs of particular persons.

Thirdly, valour. But it must be set in motion by justice, and conducted by prudence. A



prince should expose his person to the greatest perils, as often as it is necessary. This is a personal virtue, which our kings will seldom have occasion to exercise; we hope never: for domestic commotions may Heaven avert! and as for foreign enemies, Great-Britain will never want brave admirals and generals, to keep them at such a distance from the seat of government, as to make it unnecessary for the sovereign to expose his person—The glorious victories of Howe, Vincent, Duncan, Nelson, Colpoys, &c. are recent guarantees, that such bright examples will furnish a succession of naval heroes.

Fourthly, another virtue, very necessary in princes, is to be extremely reserved in discovering their thoughts and designs. This is evidently essential to those who are concerned in government. It includes a wise diffidence, and an innocent dissimulation.

Fifthly, A prince must, above all things, accustom himself to moderate his desires: for as he has the power of gratifying them, if he once gives way to them, he will run to the greatest excesses. In order to form himself to this moderation, nothing is more proper than to accustom himself to patience. This is the most necessary of all virtues, for those who are to command. A man must be patient, to become master of himself, and others. Impatience, which seems to be a vigorous exertion of the soul, is only a



weakness and inability of suffering. He who cannot wait, or suffer, is like a person that cannot keep a secret : both want resolution to contain themselves. The more power an impatient man has, the more fatal his impatience will be to himself and others.

Sixthly, Goodness and clemency are also virtues very necessary to a prince. His office is to do good ; and it is for this end, the supreme power is lodged in his hand. It is also principally by this that he ought to distinguish himself.

Seventhly, Liberality, well understood, and well applied, is so much the more essential to a prince, as avarice is a disgrace to a person to whom it costs almost nothing to be liberal. But, on the other hand, no person ought to be more careful in regulating the exercise of this noble virtue. It requires great circumspection ; and supposes, in the prince, a just discernment, and a good taste, to know how to bestow and dispense favours on proper persons—He ought, above all things, to use this virtue, for rewarding genuine merit.

But liberality has its bounds, even with the most opulent princes. The state may be compared to a family: the want of foresight, profusion of treasure, and the voluptuous inclination of princes, who are the masters of it, do more mischief than the most skilful ministers can repair.

repair. - Too surely, this was the case of the last unfortunate king of France.

A prudent economy, on the contrary, supplies the deficiencies of the revenue, maintains families and states, and preserves them in a flourishing condition. By economy, princes not only have money in time of need, but also possess the hearts of their subjects; who freely open their purses, upon any unforeseen emergency, when they see that the prince has been sparing in his expences: the contrary happens, when he has squandered away his treasures.

Thus have I given a general idea of the virtues most necessary to a sovereign; besides those which are common to him with private people; and of which some are included even in those we have been mentioning. Cicero follows almost the same ideas in the enumeration he makes of the royal virtues.

It is by the assistance of these virtues, that sovereigns are enabled to apply themselves, with success, to the functions of government; and to fulfil the different duties of it.—Let me now add a few remarks concerning the actual exercise of those duties.

There is a general rule which includes all the duties of a sovereign; and by which he may easily judge how to proceed, under every circumstance.—Let the safety of the people be the supreme law.—This ought to be the chief end of

all his actions. The supreme authority has been conferred upon him with this view ; and the fulfilling of it is the foundation of his right and power. The prince is properly the servant of the public. He ought, as it were, to forget himself, in order to think only on the advantage and good of those whom he governs. He ought not to look upon any thing as useful to himself, which is not so to the state. This was the idea of the heathen philosophers. They define a good prince, one who endeavours to render his subjects happy ; and a tyrant, on the contrary, one who aims only at his own private advantage. —I shall, from this general rule, deduce those obligations which are of a more particular nature.

The functions of government relate either to the domestic interests of the state, or to its foreign concerns.

With respect to the domestic interests of the state, the chief care of the sovereign ought to be,

First, to form his subjects to good manners. For this purpose, it is the duty of supreme rulers, not only to prescribe good laws by which every one may know how he ought to behave, in order to promote the public good ; but especially to establish the most perfect plans of public instruction, for the education

cation of youth. This is the only method of making the subjects conform to the laws, by reason and custom ; rather than through fear of punishment.

2. The sovereign ought to establish good laws for the settling of such affairs, as the subjects have most frequent occasion to transact with each other. These laws ought to be just, equitable, clear, without ambiguity and accommodated to the condition and the genius of the people, at least, so far as the good of the state will permit ; that, by their means, differences may be easily determined : but they are not to be multiplied without necessity.

3. It would be of no use to make good laws, if people were suffered to violate them with impunity. Sovereigns ought therefore, to see them properly executed ; and to punish the delinquents, without exception of persons, according to the quality and degree of the offence.

It is even sometimes proper to punish severely at first. There are circumstances in which it is clemency to make such early examples, as shall stop the course of iniquity. But what is chiefly necessary, and what justice and the public good absolutely require, is, that the severity of the laws be exercised not only upon the subjects of moderate fortune and condition, but also upon the most wealthy and powerful. It would be unjust, that either rank or riches  
x 4 should

should authorize any one to insult those who are destitute of these advantages. The populace are often reduced by oppression to despair; and their fury at last throws the state into convulsions.

Since men first joined in civil societies, to screen themselves from the injuries and malice of others, and to procure all the sweets and pleasure which can render life commodious and happy; the sovereign is obliged to hinder the subjects from wronging each other; and to maintain order and peace in the community, by a strict execution of the police-laws; to the end, that his subjects may obtain the advantages which mankind reasonably proposed to themselves by joining in society.

Mr. de la Bruiere has a fine passage upon this subject.

“ What would it avail me, or any of my fellow subjects, that my sovereign was successful  
“ and crowned with glory, that my country  
“ was powerful and the terror of neighbouring  
“ nations, if I were forced to lead a melancholy  
“ and miserable life, under the burthen of oppression and indigence—If, while I was secured  
“ from the incursions of a foreign enemy, I  
“ found myself exposed at home, to the sword  
“ of an assassin; and was less in danger of being  
“ robbed or massacred in the darkest nights, in  
“ a thick forest, than in the public streets—If  
“ safety, cleanliness, and good order, had not  
“ rendered



“ rendered living in towns so pleasant, and had  
“ not furnished them not only with the necessa-  
“ ries, but moreover with all the sweets and con-  
“ veniencies of life—If, being weak and de-  
“ fenceless, I were encroached upon in the  
“ country, by every neighbouring great man—  
“ If so good a provision had not been made to  
“ protect me against his injustice—If I had not  
“ at hand so many, and such excellent masters,  
“ to educate my children in those arts and  
“ sciences which will one day make their fortune.  
“ —If the conveniency of commerce had not  
“ made good substantial stuffs for my cloathing,  
“ and wholesome food for my nourishment;  
“ both plentiful and cheap—If, to conclude,  
“ the care of my sovereign had not given me  
“ reason to be as well contented with my for-  
“ tune, as his princely virtues must needs make  
“ him with his ?”

5. Since a prince can neither see nor do every thing himself, he must have the assistance of ministers: but as these derive their whole authority from their master, all the good or evil they do, may be finally imputed to him. It is therefore the duty of sovereigns to chuse persons of integrity and ability for the employments with which they entrust them. They ought often to examine their conduct; and to punish or recompence them, according to their merits. In fine, they ought never to refuse to lend a patient ear  
to



to the complaints of their subjects, when they are oppressed by ministers, or subordinate magistrates.

6. With regard to subsidies and taxes, since the subjects are only obliged to pay them, as they are necessary to defray the expences of the state, in war, or peace; the sovereign ought to exact no more than the public necessities, or the signal advantage of the state, shall require. He ought also to see that the subjects be incommoded as little as possible by the mode of levying the taxes laid upon them. There should be a just proportion in the tax of every individual; and there must be no exception or immunity, which may turn to the disadvantage of others. The money collected, ought to be laid out to supply the exigencies of the state; and not to be wasted in luxury, undeserved pensions, or vain magnificence.

7. It is the duty of a sovereign to draw no farther supplies from his subjects than he really stands in need of: the wealth of the subjects forms the strength of the state; and the advantage of families and individuals. A king, therefore, ought to neglect nothing that can contribute to the preservation and increase of the riches of his people. For this purpose, he should see that they draw all the profit they can from their lands, seas, commerce, arts, and manufactures; and that they keep themselves always employed in some industrious exercise or other.

other. It is likewise his duty to bring his subjects to a frugal method of living, by good sumptuary laws, which may forbid superfluous expences, especially in times of scarcity.

Lastly, it is the interest and duty of a supreme governor to guard against factions and cabals; from whence seditions and civil wars easily arise. But, above all, he ought to take care that none of his subjects place a greater dependence, even under the pretext of superior political talents, on any other power, either within or without the realm, than on his lawful sovereign.

This, in general, is the law of the public good, in regard to the domestic interests, or internal tranquillity of the state.

As to foreign concerns, the principal duties of the king are,

1. To live in peace with his neighbours, as much as he possibly can.

2. To conduct himself with prudence, in regard to the alliances and treaties he makes with other powers.

3. To adhere faithfully to the treaties he has made.

4. Not to suffer the courage of his troops to be enervated; but, on the contrary, to maintain and augment it by good discipline.

5. In due and seasonable time, to make the preparations necessary to put himself in a posture of defence.

6. But,

6. But, not to undertake any rash, or unjust war.

Lastly, even in times of peace, to be very attentive to the designs and motions of his neighbours.

Happy and glorious is the reign of the king, who follows these general principles of obligation on his part ; and highly meritorious the subjects, who, animated with a sense of his transcendent goodness, take the greatest care not to infringe his just prerogatives ; but, on the contrary, sedulously study to perform all the duties of loyal, good subjects. For, on a virtuous adherence on the reciprocal engagements between sovereigns and their subjects, is founded that national union and concord, which raises the renown, and establishes the prosperity of nations.—And it is to be observed, that every just rule of conduct here laid down for princes and subjects in general, is more particularly binding on British kings, and the people they govern.

## LECTURE IX.

ON THE RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF BRITISH SUBJECTS ; AND ON THE DUTY THEY OWE TO THEIR SOVEREIGNS, AND TO THEIR COUNTRY.

**I**N treating of the origin of governments, I have made it appear, that civil liberty was the basis of their institution ; and that the freedom of individuals, secured by the wisdom and integrity of the community, was ever the grand object of all wise and honest legislators.

It has likewise been clearly proved, that these maxims are the ground-work of the BRITISH CONSTITUTION ; and that its superior excellence in comparison with all other forms of government, consists in the just limitation of the prerogatives of the crown, and the firm security of the freedom of individuals.

These are the blessings attributed by all foreign writers to the authority of our parliaments ; for they are the bulwarks of civil liberty ; and it is from the virtuous exercise of the powers vested in

in these supreme councils of the nation, that we are to look for the full enjoyment of all the advantages derived from the exchange of natural for civil liberty. And from the same quarter we must expect a dissolution of our happy constitution, if an improper use is made of the important trusts deposited in the hands of the representatives of the people in parliament; for the power of making, altering, and repealing the laws, properly exercised, is the rock on which the freedom of this country may stand secure for ages: but if this is perverted to such a point, that either bad laws are enacted, or the good are not enforced, so that the people may be oppressed with impunity, it is easy to perceive, that it will sap the foundation, and ruin the noble superstructure.

From civil liberty, the source of the rights of the subjects in all free states, we may deduce the first, the fundamental right of Britons, on which all the rest absolutely depend.

1. The right of representation. This is so clear and indisputable, that, in the most arbitrary reigns, it has never been contested: but the second right of the people, though as clear and positive, has been so often suspended, infringed or violated at different periods of our history, that it will require a more ample illustration.

2. The

2. The right of an entire freedom in the election of persons, qualified by the laws of the land, to serve in parliament.

The enjoyment of this right is implied in the very term representative; for with what propriety can he be stiled the representative of the people, who is not freely elected and deputed as such by them?

As this freedom of elections has for many ages been deemed a vital part of our constitution, our old laws provided amply for its establishment and security; after many instances had occurred of the bad effects of violating it.

Yet, from the date of magna charta, in the reign of king John, and notwithstanding the subsequent confirmations of it, with additions, under Henry III. and Edward I. this great right was held by precarious tenures, and was never fully ascertained and declared, till the glorious revolution; when it was firmly established by the bill of rights.

Though much has been said and written concerning this clear and full declaration of the rights and privileges of the people of Great Britain, there seems to be room left for a proper explanation of its origin, importance, and good effects; and I am confirmed in this opinion, by the many misrepresentations and errors I have seen in print concerning it: for which reason, as it is the standard of our political freedom, it  
may



may not be improper to give an accurate account of the motives for insisting on this declaration at the revolution—to shew that, before that æra, the people of this country had not the full enjoyment of their constitutional freedom—to demonstrate that it was firmly established by the bill of rights—and to prove that, if any encroachments have been since made on the rights and privileges therein ascertained, it has been owing more to the misconduct of the people, than to any other cause whatever.

A brief abstract from the history of England, is indispensably requisite in this place; to enable us to draw the line between ancient and modern liberty; and it is probable, this exhibition may either make men more temperate, and better satisfied, than they in general seem to be, with the present times.

Before the restoration, the people enjoyed little more than the shadow of political freedom. In proof of this assertion, let us review the annals of the preceding dynasties of our sovereigns from the conquest.

During the government of the Norman line, the right of conquest prevailed, which admits no claim of popular freedom; and the people were too much weakened by intestine divisions, to expose themselves to any fresh calamities by a contest with arbitrary power; their purses were drained, their numbers thinned, and

their spirits broken ; to add to their misfortune, their sovereigns, intent on fixing a title held by so precarious a right as that of conquest, invited over foreign families, who strengthened the power of the crown, and lorded over the natives ; so that, in this situation of affairs, the people submitted to every imposition ; being unable either to dispute, or to resist the will of these tyrants. It is true, these princes promised their subjects, in order to make them acquiesce under their usurpations, that they would restore those rights and privileges which they enjoyed under the Saxon form of government before the Conquest ; but when they were once securely seated on the throne, they forgot all their oaths and fair speeches.

In the reign of Henry II. the first sovereign of the line of Plantagenet, the power of the crown was more limited ; but the people derived no benefit from this circumstance ; for while ecclesiastical disputes and family quarrels weakened and disturbed his administration, the grievances the people had laboured under, were continued, through inattention, and the confusion of the court.

To him succeeded that enthusiastical warrior Richard I. who exhausted the treasure of his kingdom, and lavished the blood of his subjects, for the greater glory, as he foolishly thought, of God.

In the next reign, a contest arose between the king and his barons, of little consequence to the people ; for the nobles, who had tyrannized over them in their respective districts, only wanted to establish an aristocracy, at the expence of royalty ; while King John, on the other hand, struggled hard to be the sole tyrant of the land.

The long administration of Henry III. exhibited various scenes : some in favour of an unjust, oppressive king ; others, equally advantageous to a turbulent nobility ; and one, in support of an ambitious, pretended patriot, the Earl of Leicester ; who procured the institution, in this reign, of the right of representation, as the only security for the liberties and privileges of the people : but no real advantage was gained by this seeming acquisition, for it was only made use of to establish the power of their party-leader.

To Henry III. succeeded Edward I. a good man, and a great king—but as I do not mean to advert to any point in any reign, but that alone of civil liberty, I pass over all his glorious military exploits, and only observe—that the power of the crown was not bounded by any act, in favour of the rights of the people ; but, at the same time, they had this consolation—it was not abused.

Over

Over the gloomy annals, and horrid catastrophe of Edward II. I designedly draw the veil, as they throw no light upon our interesting subject.

Edward III. was a great prince; and England flourished under his administration; but even the glory which his valour acquired, was dangerous to the nation; for though it raised its renown, yet it might have ended in its ruin; for the only difference ultimately between France being conquered by England, or England by France, would have been, that, in the former case, both kingdoms would have been governed by an English, and in the latter, by a French, king. If the power of England had prevailed, the seat of empire would have been in France, and this country might have groaned beneath the tyranny of a vice-roy; if France had prevailed, it would have been a province to that kingdom: and under either of these situations, there was no prospect of freedom for the people; nor did they experience any advances towards civil liberty in this reign, solely taken up with the ardent pursuits of war and conquest.

Richard II. had an opportunity of seeing the spirit of the nation; and, had he taken warning by the bold, but rash attempt, of a tumultuous mob, headed by an intoxicated leader, whose presumption and arrogance overthrew his whole plan, he might have had a prosperous reign:

but this struggle for liberty, so badly concerted, and so impolitically conducted, was no sooner ended, than the weak, luxurious monarch, displayed his tyrannical disposition; and the subsequent part of his reign was a series of confusion and oppression; which terminated in his deposition, and the establishment of a sagacious usurper, Henry IV. of Lancaster, under whom the people were indeed less irritated by domestic oppressions, through the unsettled situation of the crown; which made this prince cautious of offending his new subjects; but they were not more free, for the nation had not a reserved power to limit his disbursements, nor those of his glorious successor Henry V.

In the following reign were commenced the fatal disputes between the houses of Lancaster and York; which continued through the reigns of Henry VI. Edward IV. Edward V. and Richard III. during which long space of more than sixty years, the people were so far from enjoying any freedom, that they never once thought of it; on the contrary, their whole ambition consisted in fighting for a master; and they no sooner got rid of the yoke of one, than they voluntarily submitted to another; so that it was an easy matter for Henry VII. coming to the crown with a fair title, and the general voice of the nation, to avail himself of the slavish disposition which had pervaded all ranks of the people.

ple. He knew they would submit to any imposition, rather than renew the horrors of civil war; and, being of a most avaricious temper, by a course of injustice, violence, and rapine, attended with circumstances of cruelty, from the ministers of his extortions, he made his reign as dangerous and uneasy to himself, as it was odious and oppressive to his subjects.

Henry VIII. it is well known, governed the kingdom in the most arbitrary manner; by intimidating his counsellors and parliaments, till he made both so entirely subservient to his will and pleasure, that they countenanced, supported, and attempted to legalize every act of public or private cruelty and injustice, he thought proper to commit. Yet to this prince we stand indebted for the foundation on which the noble superstructure of public liberty was erected in after ages; for, without the REFORMATION, this kingdom most probably would still have groaned beneath the weight of ecclesiastical and civil tyranny.

The pride and weakness of the protector Somerset, and the wicked ambition of the Duke of Northumberland, successively harassed the kingdom during the short reign of Edward VI. But it must not be forgot, that the benefits we derive from the Reformation, we owe, in a great measure, to the Duke of Somerset, who completed the establishment of the church of England.



Mary, a devout woman, but a most execrable tyrant, succeeded her brother; and consigned over her authority to ecclesiastical furies, who daily embrued their hands in the blood of her unfortunate subjects. In this reign, not a dawn of political freedom appeared; but men were butchered for presuming to claim the natural rights of men—for thinking, speaking and acting according to the dictates of their consciences.

Elizabeth, her successor, was a princess of a different complexion; with an understanding and intrepidity superior to her sex, she governed her subjects wisely; increased the renown and splendor of her dominions; gave new life to commerce, arts, and manufactures, and studied the interest of the body politick; but every step she took for the publick welfare, was as absolutely without the consent of the people, as any of the most prejudicial measures in the reigns of her predecessors. She was fond of prerogative, and carried it to a greater extent than her father; but with the same despotic disposition, she proved an excellent sovereign; for she had the judgment and integrity to make a right use of the power she usurped over the constitution; and the beneficial manner in which she exercised it, silenced all opposition.

She invaded the privileges of the people most notoriously; often sending for the speaker of the  
house

house of commons, and telling him not only what she would, or would not suffer to be done, but also, what she would, or would not allow to be said: when she wanted money, she told him she would have it; and that there should be no debates on that subject. She ordered her chancellor to inform the house of commons, that they had no right to judge of returns in elections. She imprisoned members of parliament by her own authority—forbid some bills to be read in the house—ordered that others should not be debated there; and refused the royal assent twice, to above thirty bills that had passed both houses. I am the more particular in stating these circumstances, because they must be brought in evidence, to prove that the people of this kingdom knew not the full enjoyment of civil liberty till the Revolution.

James I. the progenitor of the equally unfortunate and undeserving race of Stuarts, succeeded this illustrious queen; of him, and his misguided son CHARLES I. little more need be said, than that, without the abilities of Elizabeth, or either the fortitude, or integrity to pursue the national interest, they made it their sole study and employment to keep up the royal prerogative; and foolishly imagined, that the people would submit to the same extension of the ministerial, usurped power of the crown, when exercised in acts tending to the disgrace and to-

tal ruin of the kingdom, as they had acquiesced under, when employed for its honour and prosperity.

With respect to the administration of Cromwell, we must do justice to his management of the foreign concerns of the nation ; which was never more respected in all parts of the world than in his time. Commerce, and the political interests of England, were firmly supported by the valour of his arms, and the wisdom of his councils ; but domestic liberty suffered more from him and his adherents, than from the king whom he put to death for extending the power of the crown beyond its legal limits. In fact, nothing but the arbitrary conduct of Cromwell, and the long parliament, could have paved the way for the restoration of the son of the de-throned and murdered monarch.

The restoration of Charles II. should have been the æra of political freedom ; for a wandering exiled prince, who could have but little hopes of ever ascending the throne of his unfortunate father, would have submitted to almost any conditions, if the negotiation had been timely and properly conducted : instead of which, he was conducted to the throne, amidst the acclamations of a nation strongly biased in favour of monarchical government ; with the restoration of which, they were so charmed and intoxicated, that they neglected to provide the proper remedies by law against the revival of those  
grievances

grievances which had subsisted in the time of Charles I; and if Lord Clarendon had not been a true friend to his country, the restored king would have been enabled to govern without a parliament, at least in time of peace; for it was proposed to settle two millions annually on him for life, to defray the expences of the administration of his government; and to enable him to support the dignity of the crown. By the integrity of this minister, England was once more preserved from despotic rule; and the sun of liberty began to rise; some wise and beneficial laws being made at this time in favour of the subjects: but this bright effulgence was soon overcast; other men were consulted, and opposite measures pursued; the interest of the king's brother predominated; a storm hovered over the nation, which burst in the following reign, and had nearly accomplished the total dissolution of civil and religious freedom.

James II. having laid the foundation of his conspiracy against the state securely, as he thought, in the life-time of Charles, whom he had persuaded to govern without a parliament for the three last years of his reign; on his own accession, threw off the mask, and grew impatient for the subversion of the constitution, and the extirpation of the protestant religion; but by the hasty strides he took to arbitrary power, as a means of accomplishing his infamous designs,

signs, providentially for these kingdoms, he brought on his own ruin ; and that glorious revolution which firmly established those rights and privileges which give to Britons, a pre-eminence above the subjects of all other states in the known world.

The declaration of the rights and privileges of the people, called the Bill of Rights, which the prince and princess of Orange were obliged to acknowledge and accept, before the crown was tendered to them, effectually drew the line between the regal prerogative, and the public liberty of the nation ; it settled all those disputable points which had been the objects of warm contention, and the sources of intestine commotions in former times, as the power of the prince, or of the people had prevailed at different æras.

The claims of Liberty and Prerogative had been abused both by the sovereigns and the people, as opportunity favoured the arbitrary views of the rulers, or the licentious disposition of the ruled.

On the one hand, the sovereign had called every thing his prerogative, that his ambition induced him to arrogate to himself ; that his strength enabled him to seize ; or that either the weakness, or the servility of his subjects, allowed him to possess.

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On the other, whatever encroachments were made by the people on the prerogative, went under the denomination of maintaining their liberties; every point they gained on the crown, stimulated by their own resolution and vigour, or encouraged by the indolence and supineness of the sovereign, was only called asserting ancient privileges, and reviving former rights: and thus both king and people were like the two contending parties described by D'Avila \*. The greatest misfortune, therefore, that can happen to a country, under a mixed form of government like ours, is to have the districts of the constituent parts of that government so indistinctly known or understood, that those who should be the joint promoters of the public welfare, are more concerned about contentions for power and privileges, than for the real interest of the nation, which must always languish and decline during these struggles, fomented by jealousy, ambition, and mercenary views.

Since then no mixed government can be free, permanent, and peaceable, but where the particular jurisdictions of its several constituent powers are clearly described, and the boundaries of each distinctly circumscribed; we may venture to pronounce, that the political freedom of Great

\* *Come fosse sempre necessario o offendere, o esse offeso*—as if it was always necessary to injure or be injured. *Istoria della guerra civile di Francia.*



Britain, did not arrive at any degree of perfection, till the Bill of Rights was admitted; and further limitations on the crown were made by the act of settlement, which placed the house of Hanover on the throne.

The rights and privileges of the people thus ascertained and firmly secured, are contained in the following articles, which are copied from the celebrated Bill of Rights; and as they give a full idea of the political principles of the British constitution, they are entitled to a place in our general Elements of Politics.

1. The pretended power of suspending laws, and the execution of laws, by regal authority, without consent of parliament, is illegal.

2. Levying of money for, or to the use of the crown, by pretence of prerogative, without grant of parliament, or for longer time, or in any other manner than the same is, or shall be granted, is illegal.

3. It is the right of the subjects to petition the king; and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning, are illegal.

4. The raising or keeping a standing army within the kingdom in time of peace, unless it be with consent of parliament, is against law.

5. Subjects who are Protestants, may have arms for their defence, suitable to their condition, and as allowed by law.

6. Elections

6. Elections for members of parliament ought to be free.

7. Freedom of speech, and debates, or proceedings in parliament, ought not to be impeached or questioned, in any court or place out of parliament.

8. Excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel nor unusual punishments inflicted.

9. Jurors ought to be duly impannelled and returned; and jurors which pass upon men in trials of high treason, ought to be freeholders.

10. All grants and promises of fines and forfeitures of particular persons before conviction, are illegal and void.

11. And for redress of all grievances, and for the amending, strengthening, and preserving of the laws, parliaments ought to be held frequently.

There are two other articles which are special, referring to particular usurpations of illegal power by James II.

We need not expatiate on these obvious privileges of British subjects, some of which have been noticed in former pages: it is in this place, however, that I beg leave to repeat my assertion, that the whole plan of civil and religious liberty in Britain, depends entirely on the sixth article; and that if this is violated, either by the crown, or by the people, the balance of our constitution

is overturned, and a most effectual step taken to tear it up by the roots.

That the freedom of elections has been frequently violated since the Revolution, particularly in the latter part of the reign of Queen Anne, and since that time, by the ministerial power of the crown, is beyond a doubt; but give me leave to observe, that the basest, the worst kind of subversion of this right, most frequently happens on the part of the people, who bestow their votes on unworthy persons, either through selfish, or partial principles.

This is that foul treason against the constitution, which saps its foundation, while it firmly establishes the illegal encroachments of the ministerial power of the crown.

Let us then, in the next place, fairly state the several duties which British subjects owe to their king and country; in doing which, I hope to make it evident, that he, who wilfully transgresses his duty to his country, is more culpable than the very worst administration, of whose mismanagement he is the primary cause.

Government and sovereignty are established by mutual agreement betwixt the governor and the governed; and justice requires that the people should be faithful to their engagements. It is, therefore, the first duty of all subjects in general to keep their word; and religiously to observe their contract with their sovereign, so long as he  
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duly performs his obligations to the community.

On this principle then, they are bound to maintain the dignity of his crown; to preserve a respect and veneration for his public and private character; to be faithful to him as their supreme head, and to venerate and esteem him as a man: in his public character we must even go one step further: if by the general tenour of his conduct he shews himself to be the father of his people, we certainly owe him filial affection and obedience: our duty to our king and country, when such a prince is on the throne, cannot be disunited; it is, in fact, one and the same thing; and every subject in the realm is bound in conscience, in honour, by the laws of nature, and by the institutes of civil society, bravely to sacrifice, if occasion requires it, his fortune, his private interests, and even his life, for the preservation of his sovereign; for under such circumstances he only discharges the duty he owes his country.

It is the duty of the subjects of a good king, to support the legal prerogatives of the crown; for the glory of a prince and of a nation, when it is equitably governed, rise or fall together, in the opinions of foreign powers. We must not, therefore, lightly or wantonly arraign his conduct, in the exercise of those most essential prerogatives, the rights of war and peace, of negotiations, treaties, alliances, and other concerns  
of

of a foreign nature. These must not be censured, much less publicly condemned, but upon the surest grounds; for it is very easy to wound a nation, and weaken its interests, through the sides of the prince; and for this reason, though the press ought to be as free as the air, I cannot but think him a traitor to his country, who, in the heat of party zeal, publishes opinions that have a tendency to excite sedition and popular tumults, nor can the punishment of such a state criminal be too severe, if found guilty by a jury. From these premises, it appears, that the pen of a party-writer in Great Britain, may prove a dagger to his country, in the hands of her foreign enemies; and I must own, I have always considered minute details of the mismanagement of ministers, or of the navy and army departments, in the most unfavourable light; having noticed the pernicious consequences of the circulation of such performances out of the kingdom, as were fit only for debates and proceedings in parliament.

It is incompatible with the duty of a good subject, to speak disrespectfully or indecently of his sovereign, or of his family; or to ridicule the foibles and the frailties to which he is liable in common with all other men; I should even imagine, that we are bound to silence upon these occasions, if, in his public capacity, he governs the nation with wisdom, equity, and mercy. All sarcasms, illiberal satires, and indelicate reflections,

tions, aimed at private persons, are sharply resented by individuals possessed of any degree of spirit. How grating then must such behaviour be to a sovereign, who is conscious that he cannot, with propriety, condescend to shew any visible tokens of displeasure, under these circumstances! and how unworthy of the generosity of Britons, to offer insults on the presumption of impunity!

The felicity of our country, so strongly depends on domestic tranquillity, that it is the essential duty of a good subject not to endanger it, by a restless, discontented disposition; ever ready to oppose the reigning powers of the state, and to misrepresent the transactions of government. We owe the king, and his ministers for the time being, more respect, than is due to any other members of society; and as men, and Christians, we are bound to put the most favourable constructions on the sentiments and actions of our rulers; therefore, we should not want to change the administration from one set of men to another, any more than the form of government, but upon the soundest and most warrantable accounts; for the prosperity of the state rests upon the stability of both: it would therefore be a subversion of all order, if either were made dependant on the capricious inconsistency of the people.



In all dubious cases, in all political contests of a domestic kind, between the king, or his ministers and the people, the presumption ought to be in favour of the crown, and the subjects ought to submit; because some state affairs are not of a nature to admit of the exposures and explanations to the public, necessary to adapt them to the capacities of the vulgar, so as to give them full satisfaction, as often as they may think fit to arraign the conduct of their rulers. It is even a question if, upon this principle, for the quiet of the state, we ought not to bear with a moderate abuse of the sovereign power: but this idea will not extend to any actual violation of the constitution, which subverts any fundamental right of the people.

These are all the duties of subjects in a free state; consequently, of British subjects, simply respecting their sovereigns; for obedience to the laws, and those obligations which should subsist between fellow-subjects, are all more properly included in the duties we owe our native country as a body politic, of which the sovereign himself is only the most distinguished member: we will, therefore, state these in the order of precedence which their respective importance claims.

The first patriotic duty of British subjects is, to choose proper representatives; and here, permit me to introduce one general maxim, which  
will

will sufficiently point out the source of our national degeneracy, both in, and out of parliament: “As the representatives of the society, “under a free government, are in their assemblies to exercise the power of the people, for “the good of the nation in general, and not for “their own private advantage; and, as men are “apt to be blinded and misled by self-interest; “nay, as there will always be a great number “of men in every society, who will, knowingly, and with their eyes open, sacrifice the “public to their private views; therefore it is “absolutely necessary, that in all questions that “come before such assemblies, no member “should have any private advantage, or emolument, to gain or to lose, by his being for, or “against either side of the question.” *Lord Somers.*

Now let us suppose an æra, in which the crown, or rather the ministers of the crown, should be able, by the many places and pensions in their gift, to have a constant majority in the house, under the absolute direction of the first lord of the treasury, or any other ostensible minister for the time being—a majority ever ready to render the joint powers of elocution and strong argument useless, by superior numbers;—no minister could desire a more effectual sacrifice of our excellent constitution, or a more secure one for himself, because he might erect

the standard of despotism, under the shadow of liberty; that is to say, under the form of a parliament. What would be the first question of any sensible foreigner, well acquainted with our right of representation, on seeing the nation thus reduced to the brink of destruction—what are the people about—what sort of representatives have they chosen—will this parliament last for many years—or will they soon have it in their power to choose proper representatives?—If so, they must have patience—the remedy is in their own hands.—But how would the same person be surprised, if he was told, that a people complaining of every species of ministerial usurpation, and encroachments on their sacred rights, had persisted, election after election, in disposing of their votes for heavy guineas, or light promises—for party purposes, or court favours—nay, for a mess of pottage—a feast, or a drunken carousal—and that even in the very height of their popular clamours and remonstrances against government—one of their representatives no sooner vacated his seat to sell himself to the minister, for a title, a place, or a pension, but they rechose him without loss of time, without opposition; though they knew that in future “he” must have something to lose by deciding any “question in their favour, if it should be contrary to the measures of the minister.”—Would he not say, that such a people had no right

right to complain of bad administrations, since they themselves, by their venal, or partial conduct, had undermined the Democratical fortifications of the state, and opened the door for a combination of the two other powers, the Monarchical and Aristocratical; to check, control, oppress, and finally ruin the third?—Once again then, let me enforce this essential duty of British subjects—to choose proper representatives. The qualifications necessary to form a complete member of the British parliament shall be stated in the clearest and most concise terms; and that they may strike every elector, as well as every candidate, for the honour of being chosen the representative of a free people, who may happen to peruse these pages, I shall therefore close my Lectures on the Elements of Politics, with this subject.

As to disqualified persons, the good sense of the people, if they would not suffer it to be biased, is sufficient to enable them to decide on all incapacities, whether legal or political; the greatest of all, however, I must remind my countrymen, ought never to escape their attention; “ he who holds any considerable office  
 “ during pleasure, cannot be deemed a proper  
 “ person to represent any body of free people; for  
 “ he must often be ungrateful to his benefactors,  
 “ before he can be true to his constituents; and  
 “ there is a much greater probability that he  
 “ will

“ will be false to the latter, than hazard the loss  
“ of a lucrative employment, by ingratitude to  
“ the former.”

The next indispensable duty which British subjects owe to their country, is a very mortifying piece of self-denial; yet he who has not the fortitude and integrity to submit to it, does not deserve to enjoy the inestimable privileges he derives from the happy circumstance of being born a member of the most distinguished civil society on earth.

Every honest subject of Great Britain, ought to be so far from aspiring to public employments, for which he is not qualified by natural genius, by education, or by principle, that it is his duty to refuse the offers that may be made him of occupying such stations, to the exclusion of men of integrity and superior abilities, whose talents might prove essentially serviceable to the state at all seasons; but more especially in times of public difficulty and danger. I cannot, therefore, conceive a fouler treason against the constitution of our country, than that of accepting unmerited places and pensions; and however unfashionable or unpracticable such a doctrine may appear, in times, when selfish principles alone seem to be the guides of people of illustrious birth, who have had liberal educations; yet it is my duty, in the investigation of true political tenets, to point out the best means  
of



of supporting the honour and dignity of civil government, though they may not be adapted to the contaminated ideas of the present race of well-bred gentlemen.

It is equally disloyal, for it is not less injurious to our country, to hold more public employments in the state, than it is possible for any one man to fill with honour; because a faithful, diligent discharge of the duties of each, taken separately, requires the constant exertion of our best talents; and a sacrifice of the greatest part of our time. There is scarce a public office of any importance in this free government, but demands the utmost application, exactness, and fidelity; in a word, to which a man of strict honour and integrity may not devote every hour of his life that can be spared from his private concerns, and the relaxations indispensably necessary to recruit his exhausted powers, and to invigorate him for fresh services.

What shall we say then of those selfish mortals, who, either in church or state, seek after pluralities, but that they are guilty of the highest injustice to their sovereign, their country, and their fellow-subjects, by monopolizing employments for the sake of the emoluments belonging to them, which they are conscious would be more worthily filled, if they were separately distributed to different persons of approved capacities, adapted to each department? And were we to



draw inferences from these general maxims, and apply them to particular offices of trust and importance under the British government, how mean, how despicable an idea must we consequently entertain of part of our fellow-subjects, sinking beneath the weight of *five cures*, and multiplied places!—But compassion requires that we should draw a veil over the cupidity of our fellow-mortals; and that we should expose no more of the deformity of human nature, than is necessary to serve the cause of public virtue: let the honest, uncorrupted subject, however, be his rank in life ever so humble, exult with becoming pride, while he can safely put his hand to his breast, and thank God that he is not one of these!

Another duty of a good subject is, not to use any unlawful means to attain any public office in the state, even though he is actually well qualified for it, and though he should thereby preclude an insufficient person; because we are not permitted to introduce a general political evil into society, for the sake of any partial good that may result from this practice. I will suppose, for instance, that a most worthy respectable citizen offers himself a candidate for a public employment, in opposition to a bad man, and that the votes run in favour of the latter, so that there is no resource left to carry the election in favour of the first, but by buying off the remain-  
ing

ing votes from the opposite party ; in this case, I apprehend, that the introduction of bribery in any shape, either by promises of particular services, or by money, is so great a political evil in a free state, that it cannot be justified on any principle, not even on the pretext before us : for the administration of the bad man is only a partial evil, of more or less consequence to society, according to the nature of the office to which he is elected ; and had the worthy citizen been chosen, the good resulting from his election could only have been partial, terminating at his death ; whereas, the bad effects of the bribery and corruption, introduced and countenanced by such an authority, might last for ages. On this principle therefore, we must condemn all unlawful measures to acquire dignities, offices of trust and emolument, &c. though they are taken in favour of the best of men, as absolutely incompatible with the duty of a British subject.

Every good subject is under an indispensable obligation to obey cheerfully and readily, all legal summonses to attend the service of his country, as well on ordinary as extraordinary occasions ; and when duly elected to troublesome, but necessary offices in civil society, to execute them with resolution and integrity ; not seeking to evade these charges by mean excuses, or base corruption, whereby unfit persons are  
often

often procured to act as deputies, to the great injury of our fellow-citizens, and to the reproach of the administrators of our domestic police. A British subject does not act consistent with his duty to his king, his country, or his fellow-subjects, who, on frivolous pretexts, avoids the important offices of a juryman, or of a constable; and I may venture to add, that if any violence, injustice, or error, is done to a good subject, in consequence of the ignorance or verality of the person acting in those offices, in the room of another who should have served, the party evading the office is guilty of a high misdemeanour, and ought to be considered as a bad member of society.

It is the duty of good subjects to pay all taxes legally imposed; and never to defraud the public revenue, by buying, selling, or receiving into custody, contraband goods, or merchandize on which the established customs, or excises, have not been paid. I am sorry to say, that British subjects too generally make light of this obligation: yet when we consider the practice of smuggling attentively, we cannot but own that it is a species of public robbery, unpardonable in Britain, where no tax can be imposed but by the consent of the representatives of the whole nation in parliament, and where the produce of these taxes is chiefly applied to the support of that form of government under which we chuse  
to

to live, and from which we require protection and aid for the preservation of our persons and property. To this we may add, that every deficiency in the public revenues, occasioned by this fraudulent practice, tends to the introduction of a new burthen on our fellow-subjects, to supply the exigencies of the state. But the discussion of this subject falls more properly under the head of finances; and is only introduced here, to shew that a good subject ought not to withhold from government, its legal tribute.

The last duty we shall notice as incumbent on every subject of the state is, not to quit the kingdom, but for the most cogent reasons; and never to the detriment of the community. On this principle, we ought not to desert our native country in times of public danger, or calamity; especially if we profess any art or science, civil or military, the exercise of which may avert the one, or abate the other. Thus, when an enemy menaces an invasion, those who are able to bear arms in defence of their country, have no right to leave the kingdom: the same rule of conduct is to be observed with respect to the professors of the medical art, when pestilential disorders rage in the land; they have enjoyed the advantages arising from their practice, in times of public welfare, and they are bound in honour and equity to face the danger, for the benefit of the community. The same may be said of all the  
useful

useful arts and employments on which the immediate subsistence of the people depends; for which reason it has been customary, in seasons of public calamity, to enact temporary laws, to oblige butchers, bakers, brewers, &c. to remain in the respective cities to which they belonged, though at the peril of their lives.

These cases excepted, it is generally allowed that subjects have a power of emigrating from a free country, without the permission of the sovereign: but it is at the same time required, that no good subject should abscond, to the detriment of the community to which he belongs. He therefore who absconds, to defraud his fellow-citizens of their legal demands on him, or who carries away with him the tools and instruments of any useful art or manufacture peculiar to his native country, or who instructs foreigners in any branch of commerce, by means of which they may become competitors, or diminish its trade, must be deemed a traitor; and should never be re-admitted to the enjoyment of the rights and privileges he acquired from the place of his nativity.

In a British subject, the act of settling in foreign countries, and establishing manufactures in them to rival their country, is a most heinous and unpardonable crime; and the more so, because Great Britain has extensive and flourishing colonies and settlements abroad, ready with open



arms to receive those whom private misfortunes exile from the mother-country. However, emigrations in large bodies, even to those settlements, must be highly prejudicial to the community; but still this is a trifling evil, in comparison with the establishment of useful and profitable manufactures in the dominions of foreign potentates; and let it be remembered, that British subjects, under this predicament, have forfeited all their natural and acquired rights, even those of succession and inheritance, our laws having justly proscribed them, unless, after notice given to them by our ambassadors, or other public ministers residing in the countries where they basely exercise their art, they return home, within the space of six months.

These are the general duties of British subjects, with respect to their sovereign and their country. There are likewise certain obligations which may be called special and local, as they arise out of the particular stations men hold under the government; and cease with their removal from those employments: such are the duties of the clergy, the magistracy, and the military; for which classes it is impossible to lay down any certain, invariable maxims of conduct: because, in these stations, much will depend upon time and circumstances; so that discretion and sound judgment must often supply the place of precept. We would therefore recommend



commend to those, who, in the early part of life, have a fair prospect of entering into any of these classes, the study of the best moral writers; of the statutes, and other law-books; and of the most approved military treatises, and historical memoirs.

With respect to the duties of subjects to each other, as individuals, and members of one political body, it is needless to enlarge upon them, for they are all included in the precepts of the Christian religion, to which we may safely refer our brethren; who will find, in the institutes of the gospel, and in the dictates of a virtuous mind, sufficient monitors to remind them, that they ought to live in peace and amity with their neighbours and countrymen; that in their manners they should be gentle, affable, and courteous to each other; that the tenour of their conduct should always be directed to prevent animosities, litigation, and violence, to promote union and harmony, in their respective residencies; and finally, that they should not only abstain from injuring their fellow-subjects, and from envying or repining at the happiness of others, but should contribute, as much as in them lies, consistent with the duty they owe to themselves and their country, to promote their welfare and felicity.

## LECTURE X.

## C O N C L U S I O N.

SKETCH OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS REQUISITE TO FORM A CONSTITUTIONAL MEMBER OF THE BRITISH IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT.

HAVING stated the general principles of the science of Politics, applied them to the British constitution, and demonstrated that it is preferable to every other system of government, it was my intention to have subjoined, by way of supplement, an analysis of the civil jurisprudence and municipal laws of England, by which the internal administration of justice is regulated. But the many editions of that excellent work, Blackstone's Commentaries, during the life of the author, together with the improvement of the last edition since his death by Mr. Christie, and the approved treatise on the Police of the Metropolis, by that discerning and active magistrate, Mr. Colquhoun, have precluded the necessity of my undertaking so arduous a task; and for which

which otherwise, I could not think myself properly qualified: It is sufficient for my present purpose, that I have pointed out those maxims of sound policy which have been allowed and approved of in all ages, and by which (the constitution of our country being always present in our minds) we may be enabled to form such an impartial opinion of the merits or demerits of the national measures of administration, and of every species of opposition to government, as will make us less liable, in future, to be the dupes of the artful insinuations of those who, availing themselves of men's ignorance of the first principles of civil society, bias their judgment, corrupt their integrity, and induce them to take a decisive part in public affairs, on false tenets.

We have already observed, that the principal duty we owe to ourselves and to our country is, to preserve the just equipoise of our excellent constitution; and as we have no other method of discharging this obligation worthily, but by maintaining free elections of proper persons to represent us in parliament, I cannot close these Lectures on the Elements of Politics with greater propriety, than by giving a general idea of the qualifications requisite to form an able, independent member of the British house of commons.

“ The foundation of every worthy character  
“ must be laid in early youth, by a rational  
“ education,

“ education, suited to the sphere of life in which  
 “ men are designed to act.”

The same accomplishments, will be requisite for a peer as for a commoner : but the merit will always be much greater in a young nobleman, who makes it the business of his early years to acquire them, because his seat in parliament being hereditary, not elective, his attachment to the studies which form a complete senator, are more disinterested ; for however unqualified, he is intitled, by succession, to his senatorial dignity.

If this maxim is admitted, it will follow of course, that the accomplished senator must be a man who has received the most virtuous, liberal, finished education, that human wisdom can communicate ; and that British electors cannot take a surer method to determine the merits of candidates for the important trust of acting as their representatives in parliament, than to scrutinize strictly the early part of life of every man, who presumes to think himself worthy of such an exalted station.

As a guide to my countrymen in their choice of representatives at some future period, when happily, Heaven may inspire them with the virtuous resolution to restore the pristine vigour of the British constitution ; and as an exemplary pattern for every youth who aspires to public employments in this free state ; I shall now de-

lineate those additional branches of education which are essentially necessary for all persons likely to become members of parliament, or statesmen, as the knowledge of the theory of Commerce, Politics and Finances; the particular subjects of these Lectures.

It is the opinion of Plato, that the Deity, in the formation of mankind, does not temper them all alike, but composes them of very different ingredients; and by a beautiful allegory, in which he compares the several degrees of human excellence to gold, silver and brass, or iron, he draws the outlines of those qualifications which are adapted to the three general classes, into which the inhabitants of a nation are usually divided. It is also a tenet of the ancient schools, that three things are requisite to form a perfect man; or, in other words, to make him as complete a resemblance, as possible, of his great Creator: nature, reason and manners.

We need not enter into a fruitless controversy, concerning the perfection or depravity of human nature; it matters not whether we derive a corrupt, maimed, imperfect understanding from our parents, in consequence of original sin, giving us a natural bias to evil; or whether a rational soul is originally given with our bodies, to discriminate us from the brutes, and to enable us to form just ideas of every object that occurs to us; since we may draw an inference from the opinions of the ancients, liable to no objection  
whatever

whatever from the systems of religion, or philosophy.

“ It is evident, that men who are destined  
“ to command, to counsel, or to give laws to  
“ whole communities, should either be com-  
“ posed by nature of finer spirits than the bulk  
“ of mankind; or should stand indebted for  
“ them, to education and manners;” at all  
events, they must be endowed with, or acquire  
pre-eminent talents distinguishing them from  
their fellow-mortals.

If, therefore, an early propensity to indolence and inactivity, an aversion to learning, slowness of apprehension, or other marks of a slender capacity appear in youth, it is the duty of parents and guardians to qualify them solely for the ordinary concerns of private life, since the faculties which lead to the chief good and happiness of mankind are deficient, or imperfect in such characters; and it would be an act of injustice to our country, to attempt to place them in public stations, where superior abilities are required, to support the honour and happiness of a whole nation. But if, notwithstanding the disadvantages of want of genius and education, men of weak understandings, availing themselves of family interest, or court-favour, will offer themselves as candidates for offices which are elective; if there is any sense of honour, any regard for the welfare of their  
A A 2 country



country left in the breasts of the electors, it must surely be their inclination, as it is their duty, to convince such men of the folly of their conduct, by rejecting them with disdain.

Next to a happy genius, an early attachment to sound manners, in defiance of all the allurements of fashionable dissipation, should be expected from those who aspire to public employments; especially of a legislative or judicial kind, in a free state. They should be perfect masters of that part of religious philosophy which teaches us to command our passions, and lays down the rules and precepts of social virtue; by which we are enabled to pursue with fortitude, temperance and perseverance, the principles of honour, probity, justice and humanity; to exhibit continual proofs of a perfect knowledge of the moral obligations we owe to society, by a regular course of good behaviour; and to shew ourselves worthy of the honours we expect from our fellow-citizens, by distinguished sobriety and delicacy of conduct; “For the art of counselling, directing or governing others with wisdom and discretion, depends “on that of living well ourselves:” how then can we expect, that the man who has passed the best part of his time in brothels, at gaming assemblies, at horse-races, or in the round of effeminate amusements, which hourly seduce the inhabitants of great cities, should be able to  
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give his advice on any important subject, respecting the internal, or external administration of public affairs? Will that man who has made it his boast and his constant practice to despise the sacred duties of religion, to violate the strictest bonds of amity, to elude the payment of his just debts, and to set order and decorum at defiance in his nocturnal revels, be a proper person to enact laws for the distribution of justice, for the security of property, for the preservation of public tranquillity, or for enforcing obedience to the civil magistrate and his substitutes; or would it not be a burlesque on sound policy, to consult such men, on the expediency of war or peace, who really know not when a war is just and equitable, a peace honourable or dishonourable, an alliance dangerous or salutary! In fine, it is the senator's duty thoroughly to understand all the obligations to honour, incorruptible integrity and loyalty, in their full force and utmost extent; and not only to know, but to practice, all the moral and social virtues: for these attainments he must stand indebted to the most celebrated writers on moral philosophy, equity, and political economy; and let it be remembered, that in such bodies of electors as usually assemble to nominate candidates at a general election, there are never wanting persons of learning and experience, capable of judging whether the parties proposed

have pursued such studies as are requisite to form the character of an accomplished senator. The freedom of this country, therefore, can never be endangered, if the electors will resolve to reject all gamesters, debauchees, prodigals and idiots; and to chuse only such persons as are properly, as well as legally qualified, to assert and maintain the rights and privileges of their constituents, and to support the dignity and happiness of a good king, the father of his people.

It is also highly expedient, that a British member of parliament should be perfectly master of ancient and modern history, but more particularly the latter, in which must be included the most accurate knowledge of every part of the history of his own country.

From the records of antiquity, he will learn true fortitude, fidelity, justice, temperance, economy, and a spirit of heroic ardour inciting him to sacrifice every private consideration; health, ease, fortune, and even life itself, for the good of his country, when she is so critically situated that her preservation from ruin depends entirely on such signal exertions of patriotism. Modern history will make him acquainted with the commercial and political interests of those nations, whose superiority or rivalry are to be guarded against, or whose friendship and alliance is to be cultivated by his own country; and it should be a fixed rule with  
electors

electors to observe if the candidates for their votes are conversant in the history of the revolutions of their own country: for he who is not animated by the glorious struggles that have been made in defence of public freedom, and the signal successes that have attended them, will either be supinely indolent and inattentive, when ministerial power encroaches on the rights of the people, or he will countenance the usurpation, if not from venality, yet either from want of public spirit, or ignorance of the danger to which the constitution is exposed.

The manners and customs of his countrymen, their natural genius, temper, general behaviour, and mode of thinking and reasoning on public affairs, should be thoroughly investigated by every man, who presumes to solicit the honour of representing his fellow-citizens in parliament; and no greater proof can be given of the incapacity, or of the sinister views of a candidate, than a manifest contempt of the manners, opinions, and bold, free behaviour of the mass of the people; for a familiar acquaintance with these, enables the accomplished senator to allay their prejudices and animosities, to silence their clamours, to remove their discontents, to settle their differences, to quell tumults, to disperse rioters, and sometimes, to prevent the most dangerous insurrections, by his affable, courteous behaviour, his friendly interposition, and his prudent

prudent advice: these are the advantages society will derive (out of doors) from his knowledge of the dispositions of the people, and how they stand affected as to the immediate posture of public affairs; and, in the senate, he will always propose lenient, conciliating measures for correcting and reforming popular abuses; while, on the contrary, he who heartily despises the vulgar herd of constituents, and what he may be pleased to call the "scum of the earth," will be violent both in the senate and in public, and will be ready to aid any desperate minister, who shall take it in his head, that "existing circumstances" render it necessary to make the people submit by the sword, or by rigid and partial prosecutions, to his arbitrary will and pleasure.

All the reasons and ends of government, every occurrence in the administration of public affairs, the proceedings of all courts of judicature, and all popular assemblies, the characters of all persons who enjoy posts of honour and confidence in the state, and the views and expectations of those who haunt the drawing-room, and the levees of ministers, are subjects of profound meditation, and of critical inquiry; and will contribute greatly to the accomplishment of a complete senator; "for the knowledge of men is a principal branch of true wisdom."

It

It is then the duty of British electors, to cast a retrospective eye on the way of living to which their candidates have been accustomed; it will be easily traced how they have passed their time, and whether they have employed it generally, in such a manner as was likely to furnish them with a competent knowledge of government, and of the state of that civil society, whose honour and interest they are to support in parliament.

The last, and one of the most important points I shall have occasion to mention, respecting the education of youth designed for any public employment, is, the art of speaking in public; which in no country in Europe is so essentially requisite as in Britain; and, yet, is too much neglected.

“ Eloquence is the ornament of wisdom, and  
“ the imperial diadem of science:” to what purpose will all the attainments already mentioned serve, in a public capacity, if the gift of speech is wanting; especially, in a country where it is almost impossible to mix in society, without being called upon to deliver our sentiments, on subjects of art, commerce, or policy? In all our public assemblies we meet with speakers; they cannot well proceed without them: but how mortifying it is to observe men of distinguished talents, versed in all the other arts and sciences which entertain or instruct mankind, so deficient in this, that we are put to the torture in hearing them, though we are convinced they are the  
best



best judges of the matter before them! In the British parliament, this qualification is inestimable, for the senator, who to a lively invention, a due arrangement of his subject, an happy choice of words, and a graceful attitude, is enabled to add a manly, harmonious voice, will render all his other accomplishments still more conspicuous; and support the cause of the commonwealth, by the dignity of a complete character. The examples of the power of eloquence in ancient times, are almost incredible; and in our days, we have seen its astonishing effects in a British House of Commons. I might be taxed with partiality, if I were to specify the few speakers, who, in the present parliament, do honour to themselves and their constituents, by the strength of their reasoning, the graces of their elocution, and the dignity of their action. But, I may freely point out as examples to my young countrymen, those departed great men, who merited the title of British orators and celebrated senators, such were the late Earls Chatham and Mansfield, Lord Camden, Lord North, and Edmund Burke.

It has been asserted by some writers of great reputation, "That the liberty of the people may, in a great measure, be determined by the state of arts and sciences, in any country." If these are patronized and carried to a great degree of perfection by the rulers of a nation,  
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it is said to be a proof that they are friends to the political freedom of mankind; and the very contrary is said to be the case, where the cultivation of them is either totally despised, or manifestly neglected. To this opinion I cannot absolutely subscribe; because I apprehend that we have, before our eyes, a striking evidence of the futility of the argument: for all the polite arts and sciences, except one, are cultivated, patronized and supported too lavishly, with a degree of vanity and idle ostentation, which must, in the end, prove highly prejudicial to our commercial interests; but the art of eloquence, one of the noblest of all human sciences, is shamefully neglected by the nation in general, and is openly discountenanced and warmly opposed by ministerial influence in particular: it is likewise very remarkable, that in proportion as the arts which are nourished and supported by effeminate luxury, have been favoured in this country, eloquence, which promotes public virtue and sound manners, has been decried; and as it has declined, so have we deviated more and more from the principles of political liberty, which are the pillars of our excellent constitution.

Let me then earnestly intreat my countrymen, not to elect mute representatives. Can any thing be more absurd than the practice of tying the tongues of two or three hundred sensible freeholders

holders in a city or county, every one of whom could deliver his sentiments with fortitude, ease, and accuracy, (if not with dignity and elegance) on national concerns, by choosing a dumb man to represent them in parliament. Every candidate who is unable to address his countrymen in a manly, nervous, eloquent style, should be set aside as an unqualified person; and the art of speaking well in public, should be made one of the most essential requisites for attaining the distinguished honour of being the deputy of a free people.

If this reformation takes place, the science of true eloquence, which supposes that the powers of oratory will only be employed on the side of virtue, will be attentively studied; and our future parliaments will be composed of men not only willing, but able, to stop the progress of ministerial encroachments on public freedom. At present, it is demonstrable that, if the people had more speaking members, the shameful practice of cutting short the debates in opposition to the ministry, by calling for the question, would be impeded, if not effectually prevented; and, vague as the idea may appear, I see no reason why a minister may not be harangued out of his motion, as well as a juryman be starved out of his opinion: at all events, the independent electors of Great Britain will be highly blameable, if they do not make the experiment.

I will

I will go one step further, and venture to affirm, that if the spirit of true patriotism, instead of its shadow, the spirit of party prevailed universally in this country, they would find it more for their interest, in the alternative, to give the legal qualification to a very poor honest gentleman, possessed of that essential accomplishment, true eloquence, and to elect him as their representative, than to chuse the principal man in the county, qualified in every other respect, but totally deficient in this.

But, in cases where there is no such alternative, after having ascertained, by a strict scrutiny, the several qualifications already pointed out, and included in a perfect education; it should be an invariable rule with electors, to prefer men of generous birth, paying particular attention to their family connections; for we very often receive impressions from education, favourable to virtue and public freedom, which are afterwards eradicated by the private influence and example of our relations. The history of every nation affords illustrations of this truth; but in none are they more frequent, than in the annals of Britain.

An independent situation with respect to fortune, and a known contempt of riches, easily discernable by a liberal, beneficent character, may be considered as the final accomplishments of a British senator.

Happy

Happy the people who have the fortitude, discernment and virtue, to elect such characters, and such alone, to enact the laws by which they are to be governed, to protect their property, to preserve and improve their commerce, to raise the public revenues with discretion, and to note the application of them with a jealous eye!

Permit me now to take my leave of this subject, with a few political apothegms, which will stand the test of the present and future times.

If ministerial influence in parliament should prevail so far, as constantly to assure a majority in the house of commons, in favour of every measure indiscriminately, which the reigning administration thinks proper to adopt and persist in, then farewell to the political pre-eminence of the British empire! for glory dwells not with slaves, but increases or diminishes with the liberty of the people.

A free nation may survive temporary thralldom; it may have a saviour: but a people enslaved by their own venal, or dastardly conduct, can only change from one oppressor to another. The natural abode of virtue is by the side of liberty; but when liberty degenerates to licentiousness, vice takes her place, and a general dissolution of all order and decorum ensues.

Remember therefore, my friends, countrymen and fellow-citizens, that all extremes are dangerous; you were born free; preserve the integrity of your virtuous ancestors, and you will

remain so.—But if you wilfully adopt the vicious dispositions, manners and customs of foreign slaves, absorbing every idea of public good, in the fashionable dissipations of a round of empty pleasures, your national character will be lost, and the distinction between you, and the subjects of neighbouring despotic states, will scarce be visible ! Vice and folly forge the chains of a degenerate nation ; bad ministers only put them on : arouse then, to a sense of public virtue, and you will soon find, that the freedom and happiness of your country depend principally on a vigorous exertion of honest principles in the commons of the realm.

And above all, bear it constantly in your minds, that in time of war, or any other public calamity, unanimity is the basis of national security ; and that laying aside all party connexions, it is the duty of the higher classes in the state, to take the lead, and to animate the mass of the people, by their loyal example, to rally round the throne of a beloved sovereign ; and to form an invincible phalanx against the enemies of your king and country !





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## INTRODUCTION.

**I**T has been a constant subject of complaint and reproach, that the inhabitants of Great Britain, not excepting the lower classes of the people, are too strongly addicted to political inquiries and discussions, which several eminent writers have considered as a national vice in the people, deeming that science to be totally foreign to their sphere of life.

We cannot wonder that foreigners, the subjects of despotic governments, should turn this general propensity into ridicule, and describe our happy country, as a nation, where men and women of all ranks converse together on public affairs, with as much freedom as they do of their domestic concerns. But it is astonishing and unpardonable, that British authors, who have written upon the subject, since the establishment of the funding system, and the vast extension of paper credit, should attempt to laugh us out of this interesting disposition, or affect to be surprised at it; and it is still more culpable in any insolent, over-bearing minister of state, or his  
B B 2  
colleagues,

colleagues, to express anger, or pursue resentment on this account ; provided political writers and speakers keep to general subjects, and are careful not to make use of expressions tending to excite sedition, or to propagate personal invective, or scurrility and abuse.

Extent of dominion, expensive wars, and various contingencies, have, of late years, enlarged the operations of the funding system, by adding, during every year of war, an enormous load of public debt ; and the several rates of annual interest to be paid half yearly, on the immense capitals borrowed from the public creditors of government, amounting to many millions, beyond what the former revenues of the state could supply : new duties and taxes under different denominations have been imposed for the due payment thereof ; and being principally levied on articles of home consumption and the necessaries of life, they bear so heavy upon the artizan, the manufacturer, the tradesman, and the merchant, that each of these, in their several stations, must feel a considerable degree of anxiety respecting the administration of public affairs.

The long continuance of a war, must of course considerably increase these taxes, and give birth to new ones, to pay the interest of fresh loans. Mal-administration of the public revenues,

revenues, especially by prodigal expenditures, such as ill-judged expeditions, useless subsidies to foreign powers, unmerited pensions, and other emoluments granted to the friends and favourites of ministers at home: all of them, calculated to increase the burthens laid on the community at large, and preventing a diminution of them in times of profound peace. Under these circumstances then, the motives may be traced for the inquisitive turn of mind of the mass of the people. The state of the nation sends them to coffee-houses, and other places of public resort, to read newspapers and political pamphlets, and to canvass freely, according to their various capacities, or interests, the conduct of administration.

But let us ascend a little higher to those numerous classes of persons of rank and property who are deeply interested in the finances of the state, having vested great part of their property, and many individuals their whole fortunes, in the loans denominated the Public Funds.

In times of peace, every rumour of war agitates and perplexes them; as the consequences of a rupture with any considerable foreign power must be additional loans, proportionable to the exigencies of government; and the creation of new funds must necessarily lessen the value of the old. In times of war, the



alarm is still greater; the invasion of a foreign enemy, might reduce the funds to one half of their original value; for the universal panic, in that case, would induce such a number of proprietors to sell out, in order to transport their property to some place of safety, that the paucity of purchasers might reduce the nominal *one hundred pounds* capital, to be worth not more than *fifty pounds* in specie—great national losses by sea, or at land, involving government in fresh extraordinary expences; tumults, insurrections, or general discontent at home, and a variety of other incidents, contribute to terrify those whose whole, or chief support depends on the funds, in times of public danger.

Finally, the open market for those funds, and the frequent fluctuations in the prices, are a never ceasing cause of that avidity for news, and that anxious solicitude respecting all political occurrences, which distinguish our countrymen from the acquiescent subjects of other kingdoms.

Allowing then, for that unhappy state of the human mind, when it is fluctuating between hope and fear, let us not too hastily blame the people, thus deeply interested in the fate of loans and taxes, if they sometimes vent a little ill-humour, whenever they think the public affairs of the empire in general, or the revenue department in particular, is weakly, or corruptly administered :

nistered : nor must the dissatisfaction thus expressed, always be attributed to faction and party ; for it is much oftener the voice of interest, and when the murmurs of the people are viewed in this favourable light, a wise and temperate minister will consider them as the effect of a cause he cannot remove, and will submit to the evil with a good grace. He will go one step farther, and in as much as is consistent with the dignity of the crown, and with that secrecy, on which the security of the state often depends, he will exert himself, to convince the public, that the national interest is firmly supported at home and abroad ; and he will authoritatively and expeditiously contradict every false intelligence, that is likely to instill causeless fears into the minds of the stock holders : or if any real, unfortunate turn of public affairs is to be apprehended, or has actually taken place, he will make the earliest, and most explicit notification of it to the whole nation ; that advantage may not be taken, by ill-designing men, through the medium of private correspondence, to defraud timid and credulous persons of their property, by augmenting their fears, in order to purchase their stock at a low price.

These preliminary remarks I have submitted to your consideration, as essentially necessary, to enable you to comprehend more distinctly, the intricate parts of our present subject, and as

the only sure guides, in forming a correct opinion concerning the advantages and disadvantages of the funding system, which is the basis of all our revenue transactions, and which, in all probability, together with its entailed taxes, will exist for ages, and affect generations yet unborn.

# ELEMENTS OF FINANCES.

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## LECTURE I.

WE must now trace the origin to remote times, of all aids, subsidies, grants, and taxes, contributed or paid, either voluntarily, or by compulsion, to the sovereigns, or rulers of nations, for the public service.

This will naturally lead us to a concise history of the various modes of raising public revenues, in different ages and countries, for the maintenance and support of civil government, as well as to provide for the extraordinary exigencies of war; and from this historical review, will be deduced some of the elementary principles of modern finance systems, particularly, the origin of *public credit*.

It appears from the few authorities extant upon the subject, that aids, contributions, and public revenues, for the support of government, are as ancient as the first institutes of civil society. In fact, they were the obvious consequences of the change mankind underwent, by  
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quitting the state of nature, for that of human policy.

As it was found necessary to vest a supreme authority to govern, in one, or more persons, for the benefit of the community ; so was it equally requisite to entrust a public treasure in the hands of the rulers of nations, as a collateral means of securing obedience to legal authority at home, and of providing a proper force to repel all hostile attempts of foreign enemies. But the methods of accumulating public treasures, and of furnishing revenues for the support of the dignity of the supreme rulers, or for the extraordinary exigencies of the state, were as various, as the different manners and customs of nations ; and widely different from the systems of finance invented in modern times.

It was the common practice of the ancients, to make provision in times of peace, for the necessities of war ; and to hoard up treasures beforehand, as the instruments either of defence or conquest, without trusting to extraordinary imposts, much less to borrowing, in times of trouble and confusion.

In order therefore, to conceive a right idea of the systems of finance in ancient governments, it is necessary to bear in mind, that princes, and the chiefs in republics, had always a domain or real estate, assigned to them, in proportion to their condition, and to the extent  
of

of territory belonging to the community: and that their first finance principle was, to consider subsidies, or imposts levied on their subjects, solely, “ as an extra-supply, granted through  
“ necessity, to which public danger gave birth,  
“ and which expired on the restoration of public  
“ tranquillity.”

But it sometimes happened that the frugality of the monarch, or of the rulers of republics, enabled them to amass treasures sufficient to defray the expences of a war, and in that case, no tax was imposed on the people. For princes, and other chief magistrates, “ in ancient times,” would have thought it dishonourable to have kept their treasures locked up, or withheld from the public service. When the reverse happened, and a prodigal, or covetous king was upon the throne, or men of the same complexion governed a republic, then temporary aids were granted either in specie, or in kind.

But the very instant an enemy was conquered, or that the effects taken in war were sufficient to pay the charges of carrying it on, all further aid from the subjects was deemed unreasonable, and therefore rarely granted. Indeed the ancients generally made their conquests support their war expences, or they fell in the attempt, and became themselves tributary to their victors; their wars were decisive, therefore their taxes  
were



were temporary, not permanent like those of modern states.—See “*Memoires pour servir à l’Histoire des Finances, par M. Le Chevalier D’Eon.* London, 1764.”

A fertile country and industrious inhabitants, together with a mild and equitable government, were the sources of the power and prosperity of the *Egyptians* for a long succession of ages. The kings of Egypt enjoyed a rich domain; this they improved by economy, and by commerce, which they carried on, in their own names; from thence, they derived the most advantageous succours for public emergencies; and the same hand that grasped the sceptre, disdained not to sign the dispatches of the royal factors, who were sent to carry on trade, for the sovereign’s account, with foreign nations. MINES of gold and silver were always deemed the separate property of the sovereign, and these, according to *Diodorus Siculus*, produced annually in Egypt, a revenue of *two millions* of our money. The tributes of conquered nations entered also into the royal coffers; the spoils of war appertained likewise to the king; but he generally distributed a portion to the priests, the warriors, and other subjects. With these treasures in hand, the people were exempted from all taxes. The great officers of state, and other public magistrates, had likewise domains assigned to them, consisting

consisting of a certain quantity of land, and slaves to cultivate it; and these being fixed, and invariable, they devoted themselves, without venality to the public service. Their immense public works were all carried on at the expence of the royal treasury, and what that treasury must have been, the monuments of the foolish ostentation of their kings, may lead us to conjecture, when we are told, that it cost no less than 187,583 l. sterling, for food, for the consumption of the workmen who built the *grand pyramid*. The Persians are the next nation of repute, concerning whose finances we have any certain information upon record. Their subsidies were chiefly paid to their princes in kind, that is to say, in the products of nature, such as corn, other provisions, forage, horses, camels, &c. These were sold or exchanged in traffic, by which means, the royal treasury was replenished. *Strabo* relates, that the satrap of Armenia sent regularly, every year to the king of Persia, 20,000 colts.

Darius, the son of Hystaspes, was the first Persian monarch who demanded from the respective provinces of his kingdom, a fixed contribution in specie; but so odious was the very idea of taxation to the Persians, that they stiled Darius, by way of contempt, *the trader*.

The republics of Greece were subject to different taxes; those of Athens were the most remarkable.

remarkable. Solon the great Athenian legislator, held it as a political maxim—"That wise regulations, with respect to the public finances, ought to be one of the first objects of legislation;" he therefore divided the people into *three* classes.

The *first*, was composed of those, whose effects were estimated at 500 measures of grain and liquids, for in this manner they computed the wealth of their citizens.

The *second*, consisted of such as were worth to the amount of 300 measures.

The *third*, of those who had but 200.

From these three classes they elected their magistrates; all the inferior citizens were comprised under the denominations of mercenaries and artizans, in other words, of persons labouring with their hands for a livelihood, and servants.

The citizens of the first class contributed annually, to the public treasury, an Attic talent of silver, about 50 l. sterling.

The second class—half a talent.

The third—ten minæ, or the *sixth* part of a talent.

As the contributions to the public treasury were made the standard for regulating the order of the classes; the citizens by increasing their subsidies to the state, might raise themselves from one class to another, at their option:

Strangers, *viz.* aliens or foreigners, likewise paid a small annual subsidy, about seven shillings of our money; and on failure of this trifling payment, the law was very severe, they were reduced to servitude, and exposed to public sale. The other revenues of the Athenian commonwealth, were a species of land-tax, but it was paid in the natural products of the cultivated ground: duties on the importation and exportation of merchandize; on the working of silver mines; and lastly, fines imposed by the judges on convicts, for various trespasses and crimes.

We discover in the Athenian system of finance, a principle which ought to be invariably adhered to in every civilized government. Property should be followed up, wherever it is to be found, and a proportionable subsidy be required from the owners. This is very little attended to in England, where the common people, not eligible to magistracy, those, who at Athens were exempt from all taxation, bear the burthen of the public expences, and pay not only for the charges of war, but for the support and protection of civil government, in a manner that bears no proportion to the benefits *they* derive from that government, in comparison with their *opulent* neighbours. The great reputation of Solon, who, even by modern writers is styled—"The prince of legislators," renders this brief statement of the Athenian contributions

tions for the support of government, highly interesting.

The history of the Lacedemonian republic, improvident as it was, furnishes an anecdote of a very singular nature, relative to our subject.

The Samians demanding a subsidy from the Lacedemonians for their assistance in conquering their enemies ; they fell upon an extraordinary expedient, having no public treasure. “ The government enjoined all the subjects of the state to keep a strict fast, for one day, extending the decree to their very cattle ; and it was ordered, that the value of the ordinary consumption of food and forage for that day, in case they had not fasted, should be paid to the Samians.” See *Aristotle de Œconomia*.

The celebrated ROMAN REPUBLIC owed its *prosperity* to the wise administration of its revenues, and its *ruin* to the corruption, venality, and dissipation of the managers of that department.

While her generals and chief magistrates reckoned it a distinguishing part of their public character, to bring home immense treasures to the state, and to deposit them in the temple of Saturn, as a sacred pledge for the public use, in times of pressing danger, Rome flourished : every new victory added to the national treasure : conquered nations were made tributary : the honour of an alliance with the Roman state was paid for by annual, or fixed subsidies ; and the triumphs



of her consuls, victors, and ambassadors were more or less honourable, in proportion to the riches they brought into the treasury. The honours which virtue may freely accept, the applause of their countrymen, made ambition laudable; for it was disinterested.

But, when the republic declined, and particularly, during the civil wars of Pompey, the revenues drawn from their colonies were considerably diminished; and while Octavius Cæsar and Mark Anthony disputed the empire of the world, the public treasury was totally exhausted; and in proportion as the empire increased and established itself on the ruins of the republic, the economy of government diminished, its expences accumulated, and taxation made such a rapid progress, that it soon became insupportable.

From this period, taxes became arbitrary, depending entirely on the dispositions of the emperors. Some of them, however, supported their government, as in the time of the republic, on the spoils and tributes of conquered countries; so that, under good reigns, this supply filled the public treasury; but prodigal emperors squandered it, and took to rapine and extortion to replenish it. These, not only had recourse to taxes known in the world before their time, but they likewise invented others, the very name of which were sufficient to excite hatred, despair, and revolt.



One laid a tax on *smoke*, another on the *air* ; another on *the shadow of trees* ; another on sepulchral rites ; another, on every tile of a house ; and to complete the list, *Vespasian* levied a tax on *urine*, because it was used for putrifying a plant called *orseille*, of which a red paste was made, esteemed excellent in dying, before the discovery of *cochineal*.

The only rational taxes under the Roman government, which have been adopted by modern states, are the land and capitation taxes ; and some duties on the importation of merchandize ; which, together with the twentieth part of the purchase money on the sale of slaves, formed the revenues destined to defray the ordinary expences of the state, under the emperors.

The afore-mentioned twentieth, was distinguished by the title *sanctum crarium*, the holy treasure, and it was kept apart in the temple of Saturn, not to be touched but upon the most urgent and extraordinary emergencies ; so that when Julius Cæsar, amongst other violations of the freedom of his country, forced open the temple and stole the treasure, it is said, by some historians, that this fund amounted to two millions sterling : an immense sum in those days !

Upon the dissolution of the Roman empire, Europe was over-run by barbarous nations, who supported their power, by the military services of  
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the people. But the chiefs who established feudal kingdoms, found themselves in a fluctuating situation, owing to the opposition of the barons, their principal vassals, who, having once raised a military force for the defence of the sovereign in time of war, afterwards made use of the same force to become independent, erecting their territories into little principalities. Whilst power remained thus distributed in many divisions, no regular system of supplying public revenues could be established, but aids in kind, and in specie were oppressively extorted by each chief, and by the inferior barons, in their respective districts, according to caprice, and the good or bad dispositions of the ruling powers, without any fixed principle. But when the power of these barons was subverted, and regular forms of government prevailed generally in Europe, wars became less frequent; military services were abolished; and the revenue principle of taxation was recurred to, as in ancient times.

The riches and strength of a state began now to be estimated, not by its possession of mines of silver and gold, nor yet by the quantity of treasure amassed or hoarded up in coffers, but by the number, industry, and commercial spirit of its inhabitants, by which a circulation of money became general, the nation flourished, and the mass of the people, not a few individuals alone,

such as barons and military chiefs, were made easy and happy in their circumstances.

It was much about this æra, that the Jews being impolitically banished from some European states, retired to others, and invented bills of exchange, as the means of drawing the value of their effects out of those countries they had been obliged to quit.

A plain proof, that though they were persecuted and exiled through false principles of policy and religion, by the rulers of different nations, there were not wanting, at that time, men of high honour and distinguished integrity in those countries, who disapproved these measures, and honestly remitted to them, in bills on their correspondents, the amount of their abandoned property.

The chief residence of the exiled Jews was Lombardy; from which country they afterwards emigrated to every nation, whose free constitution would admit of their settling, though under severe limitations and restrictions. Having converted their effects, as we have just observed, into negociable bills of exchange, and by means thereof into money, they established a traffic, at that time unknown in Europe; and therefore falsely styled by many respectable authors, a new invention, viz. "Lending out money at interest;" a business openly carried on in the Ro-

man empire, and which, towards its decline, was loudly complained of, having degenerated into oppressive, extortionate usury.

Lombardy thus became the general mart for money. Extravagant and needy princes mortgaged their lands and principalities to obtain large sums of money of the Jews for emergent occasions; and sometimes, they were so distressed, as to be obliged to pawn their jewels and the regalia of their crowns, on such domestic occasions as to provide dowries for their daughters; or to furnish out sumptuous entertainments, and costly public shews, such as coronations, royal marriages, &c.

The idea of national credit is reputed to owe its origin to the loans thus made to princes, on the basis of private credit. In proportion as paper credit increased by bills of exchange, and private obligations, such as bonds, promissory notes, and mortgage-deeds; loans became more frequent; and money being thus easily obtained, the principle of borrowing became universal and irreproachable, because it was practised by sovereigns and whole communities of men, as well as by private individuals.

In process of time, it became customary to raise money in most nations of Europe, on a branch of taxes, assigned to the lender for the re-payment of his principal and interest. This operation was called farming the public revenue

of a state, and it subsisted in France till the late revolution, of which it was a principal cause.

But as the commerce of the states of Europe was but trifling at the time when paper credit was first established, few governments could borrow money of their own subjects, for they had not the modern means of acquiring wealth; therefore the Jews of Lombardy were applied to; and these money negotiations having brought them more intimately acquainted with the ministers and agents of the princes of Europe; some of these, more enlightened than the rest, discovered the commercial genius of this industrious persecuted people; found that it might be tamed to the advantage of the state that should protect them, and on this principle, gave them encouragement to settle in their respective countries. So early as the reign of Edward the Confessor, we find them settled in England under the immediate protection of the sovereign, for which they paid very dear; and it was likewise necessary, to consider them as part of the king's property, in order to screen them from the fury of a populace blinded by prejudice and superstition.

Mortgaging their domains, borrowing money on their jewels, and other such temporary expedients, being found inadequate to the wants of most of the great princes of Europe, as their ambition and luxury increased; aids and subsidies from the property of their subjects, were occasionally

sionally granted, upon very extraordinary occasions. But these aids were originally given in kind, and suited in their very nature to the occasions for which they were required. When, for instance, a king of England, in the early periods of our history, requested a subsidy for his domestic concerns, it was granted in wool; and the care of converting it into money, was left to the sovereign or his agents in foreign countries, who were thence called royal merchants. But if war was to be carried on against a foreign enemy, each county furnished its quota of ships, seamen, and land forces; and either paid for, or provided victuals and stores.

A revolution in the system of polity at length taking place, in consequence of which military service was abolished, and wool prohibited to be exported from England; subsidies were granted in specie, by the creation of taxes; but the produce of these being slow and uncertain, it often happened, that the emergency was such as required on the instant, the gross sum which these taxes could only produce in a year; therefore money was borrowed on the estimated amount of the annual income, by anticipation, or it was farmed out for a certain sum. When the inconveniences, and the oppressions of these methods had rendered them odious, another expedient took place; which was to raise the supplies for the extra demands of the state within the



year, by what were called *perennial* ways and means; the chief of which was by monthly, or half yearly *assessments* on every county throughout the kingdom. But, finally, extent of territory by colonization and conquests; increase of commerce, and the multiplication of foreign political connections in consequence thereof; all combined to involve the maritime powers of Europe in long, expensive wars, which rendered it impossible, in countries destitute of mines of gold and silver, to raise the large supplies now become requisite, by any rational means, within the year, so as not to entail any debt on the next.

Then it was, that PUBLIC CREDIT was introduced into France and England, on the same principle—that of borrowing of the natives and of foreigners, immense sums on *determinate* or *perpetual annuities*, for the payment of which, certain funds were created and appropriated, whereby taxes became hereditary, and fixed upon the subjects, yet unborn, of both countries.

But this fruitful expedient, owing to the extensive, though successful wars carried on by Great Britain from the revolution to the present time; has brought upon ourselves, and entailed upon generations to come, a *national debt* amounting to a sum almost incredible: a circumstance, in the opinion of many men of cool judgment and sound understanding, extremely alarming!

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It is therefore become a subject of the most serious inquiry—

Whether the *public credit* of Great Britain, and its funding system founded thereon, proceeds on true, or false principles? In other words—Whether it will still continue to be the prime source of our national security and prosperity; or in the end be productive of some dreadful revolution. *Hume*, in his Political Essays, asserted that the nation would become bankrupt whenever the debt amounted to 100,000,000!

And this important question naturally leads us to a discussion of the nature of that *public credit*, and of the *funding system* founded thereon.

## LECTURE II.

ON THE NATURE, SOLIDITY, EXTENT, AND  
NATIONAL ADVANTAGES OF THE PUBLIC  
CREDIT AND FUNDING SYSTEM OF GREAT  
BRITAIN.

**P**UBLIC credit, as it respects money transactions, and particularly the System of Finances, or the administration of the public revenue, means no more than that mutual confidence between government and the people, which enables the former to obtain, by disposing the latter to contribute very large portions of their personal estates, to supply the exigencies of the state, on great emergencies; upon the strength of obligations contracted, and promised punctually to be performed in future time. This has been carried to a greater height in England of late years, than ever was imagined in any other country, or conceived to be possible in this. In short, it has astonished and perplexed some of the powers of Europe, and has been the terror of others.

No age, no history of any country ancient or modern, has been able to produce such a glorious

rious example of inviolate constitutional faith and honour on the part of the borrowers; or of such cheerful and unlimited confidence, on the part of the lenders.

This remark is introduced as a just and well-merited eulogium on the parties concerned, merely as debtors and creditors. The consequences, to the rest of the nation, of this vast paper castle, we must discuss more minutely, hereafter.

The means by which public credit has been established in England, must be sought for in the institution of national banks in other countries, and of the bank of England.

As soon as bills of exchange, notes of hand, bonds, and other securities for money, modernly styled *paper money*, became the medium of mutual exchanges between nation and nation, in their commercial intercourses; and between the subjects of any particular nation internally, a less quantity of gold and silver coins was sufficient for the purposes of general circulation; and the largest quantities of the precious metals, instead of remaining in private hands, became deposited in banks; and these were called banks of deposit; the money of the state, and of individuals, being lodged therein, to be refunded on demand. A further improvement was afterwards made by converting these banks of *deposit* into banks of *circulation*. The two principal banks

banks of Europe of this kind, are the *bank of Amsterdam* and the *bank of England*.

The bank of Amsterdam was founded early in the seventeenth century ; and by an ordinance published soon after its establishment, the payments of bills of exchange, and for merchandise purchased in wholesale quantities, *must* be made solely in assignments upon the bank. But for the convenience of strangers and of retailers, there are a set of cashiers out of the bank, always ready to give cash for bank assignments, which furnishes a sufficient circulation of money for common use ; and as the value of bank money is always above that of the current specie, the difference in the exchange of a bank assignment for currency, is called the *Agio*, and it varies from 3 to 5 per cent.

This bank does not avail itself of the advantage of issuing notes on demand for cash.

King William III. established the bank of England, upon some of the outlines of that of Amsterdam ; but with the following material improvement. Our bank issues notes on demand to an incredible amount, yet no one is obliged to receive them in payment ; they are not even a legal tender in lieu of money for a debt ; the matter is left free and optionable, agreeable to the genius of the British constitution. But the great advantages derived to government from the institution

institution of this bank are the establishment of public credit on the basis of its system of circulating notes; and the internal connection between the administration of the finances of the state, and the bank. This has enabled government, on great emergencies, to raise such large sums for the public service, as could not have been levied, without oppressive assessments, but by the aid of such a bank, The original fund for establishing the bank as a *corporation*, is called *bank stock*; it was augmented from time to time, on the renewal of their charters, by the addition of new proprietors, subscribers to the new capitals; and both the original sum and the additional sums have been lent to government at low interest, on extraordinary occasions, generally in time of war, as a consideration for the renewals of their charters for the term of twenty-one years. And these loans from the bank, form a principal article of the national debt.

The next public benefit derived from the close connexion of government with the bank is, that of borrowing very large sums of money of the subjects and of foreigners, to supply the extra demands of the state in times of war, by constituting *annuities determinate* and *perpetual*, as a consideration for the capital sums so borrowed; and these were made transferrable at the bank; whereby a new species of monied property, unknown



known before, was created; and a market opened for buying and selling these annuities, which in many respects answers the purpose of refunding, or paying off the capitals by government.

The brokers employed to transfer these funds from one person to another, are called *stock-brokers*; and their commission for buying or selling is one eighth of a pound on every 100*l.* exactly the same as is taken by the agents of the bank of Amsterdam, for changing bank assignments into current money; and this is the true origin of the funding system, and of the generation of stock brokers.

But the misfortune attending the funding system at the revolution was, a want of confidence in the new government; and the fear of a counter-revolution restoring king James; so that king William, instead of being able to avail himself of the great plenty of money then in the nation, was obliged to offer very high interest, and to raise the supplies on the most disadvantageous terms; which opened the door to very heavy excises, to pay the interest of *long annuities*.

Had king William's government been fixed, and freed from all apprehensions of rebellions or revolt, he might have borrowed money at *two per cent.* instead of *six*, which he was obliged

obliged to give on *redeemable annuities*; and *fourteen*, on *long annuities*.

By *redeemable annuities* are meant, such as parliament reserves a power to redeem, or pay off, by reimbursements of the capitals, or principal sums borrowed; in the mean time, an annual interest, or annuity of three, four, or five per cent. must be paid half yearly, according to the terms of the loan.

*Long annuities* mean certain annual rates of interest granted for 90 or 100 years, on condition of sinking the capital, which is paid, not lent, to purchase such annuities. King William borrowed large sums on this plan; and as the annual annuity was very high, *viz. ten, twelve, and fourteen* per cent. this occasioned very burthensome taxes on his subjects. As these annuities expired, the taxes appropriated for the payment of them, instead of being abolished, have been continued, which increased the revenue, during Mr. Pitt's administration of the finances; and more will expire every year.

*Short annuities* are of a more modern date; and have been granted as *douccours*, at sundry times, by late ministers of the finances, to make up the *par* of sums borrowed on redeemable annuities, when their value was considerably under *par*. They are called short annuities, being granted for a short term of years, in comparison with

with long annuities, viz. to expire, in 10, 20, or at most 30 years.

Life annuities are granted either for one, or more lives; and if to a number of persons, with benefit of survivorship to the longest liver, they are called *tontines*.

No capital sums have been borrowed by government of late years on life annuities; because the state of the finances would not admit of paying high interest on such annuities, in consideration of sinking the capital.

But small annuities for life have been annexed, in the same manner as short annuities, to redeemable annuities, to make up the *par* of money borrowed at low interest.

*Long*, and *short*, and *life* annuities, are called, in the statement of the *national debt*, irredeemable annuities, because they cannot be redeemed; but the payment of them must continue till the expiration of the term of years for which they were originally granted.

The *unfunded debt* of the nation consists, for some years after every war, of *navy*, *victualling*, and *ordnance bills*; these are issued in times of war, to persons contracting to supply the navy with timber, provisions, &c. and the ordnance offices, with stores, ammunition, transport ships, &c. Instead of paying in money, the respective offices, after examining and passing the accounts of the contractors, give them bills for the  
amount

amount, signed by the commissioners, and payable by the treasury, *six months after date*; if they are not then discharged, they bear an interest of four or five per cent. until paid: and if not paid off by any particular aid of parliament; they are usually funded with the consent of the proprietors, being converted into redeemable annuities, at the same rate of interest.

The aforesaid bills are all negotiable at the stock exchange, and at banker's shops, by endorsement, like bills of exchange, or notes of hand payable to order.

In times of war, besides the extra aids, called the *supply* for the service of the current year, provided for by *ways and means* stated in parliament, and vulgarly called, The *Minister's Budget*; a vote of credit is often given to the king, to enable his ministers to raise money, for any extraordinary emergency, during the recess of parliament. The chancellor of the exchequer raises the money by exchequer bills, which bear five per cent. interest, and are to be paid off from the first supplies granted in the following session of parliament, consequently, they cannot be current above one year; but if the minister finds it inconvenient to disburse the sums necessary to pay them off, he creates and issues new bills to the same amount, by fresh grants of parliament; and thus there are generally

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rally from year, to year *two or three* millions of exchequer bills outstanding, which must be added to the unfunded debt.

#### RECAPITULATION.

The funded debt consisting of the sums due to the bank, the South Sea, and India Companies ; as well for their capital stocks, as for the sums borrowed from time to time, on redeemable annuities transferrable at the bank, the South Sea, and India houses, together with the irredeemable annuities at the exchequer ; and the unfunded debt, constitute in toto, what is commonly called the *national debt* ; and this debt was created, and still subsists on the public credit of the nation, which is supported by the three estates of the realm in parliament, for they provide ways and means to pay the interests of the several funds regularly, every half year, under the title of dividends.

But to obviate the inconveniences that might arise to tradesmen and other persons, from being obliged to keep the money they have placed in the funds, as it were, locked up, owing to the inability of government to pay them off, the open market already mentioned, brings together almost every day, a concourse of buyers and sellers, and the price at which any considerable sum is sold, fixes the current, printed price of  
that

that day, and the following; till a variation takes place.

For the forms of transacting the business of transferring stock at the different offices, see, Every Man his own Broker, or a Treatise on the Funds, a pocket volume, the 12th edition, 1798.\*

“ In fine, public securities are with us, become a kind of money, and pass as readily at the current price, as gold or silver. Wherever any profitable undertaking offers itself however expensive, there are never wanting hands enough to embrace it. Our national debts furnish our merchants with a species of money, that is continually multiplying in their hands; and produces sure gain, besides the profits of their commerce. This must enable them to trade for less profit. The small profit of the merchant renders the commodity cheaper; causes a greater consumption; quickens the labour of the common people, and helps to spread arts and industry through the world.” *Hume on Public Credit.*

It is not possible to add to this analysis of Public Credit, and its beneficial effects, without becoming tediously prolix, and indeed I most heartily subscribe to the following opinion of *Sir James Stuart in his Political Economy.*

\* London, printed for Richardsons, at the Royal Exchange.



“ The principles which influence the doctrine of public credit, are so few and so plain, that it is surprising to see how circumstances could possibly involve them in the obscurity into which we find them plunged on many occasions.”—He might have added, by most writers on the subject, for want of precision.

## LECTURE III.

## PROGRESS OF THE NATIONAL DEBT.

THE difference between times of peace, and of war, with respect to the financial operations of the minister of that department, is of such magnitude, that it very properly demands, a division of the statements of the capitals that have been raised from time to time, together with the annual interests payable thereon.

Our first division therefore, commences with the winding up of the treasury accounts to be laid before parliament, in the next session after the general peace of 1783.

The second, will open with the unfortunate coalition war against the French republic; and in the sequel, with Spain and Holland, and will close with the loan for the service of the year 1781. The last act of the boldest minister, of all the ministers of the finances, who have filled that department, since the introduction of the funding system by King William III.

*State of the NATIONAL DEBT as delivered into PARLIAMENT, by the COMMISSIONERS appointed to take and state the public accounts of the kingdom; dated December 4th, 1783.*

At the BANK OF ENGLAND; in bank stock and annuities.

Consolidated at 3, 4, and 5 per cent.	-	-	-	£. 208,508,750
Annual interest paid half-yearly				6,826,063
Charges of Management	-			116,242
At the SOUTH SEA HOUSE				25,984,684
Annual interest paid half-yearly				779,540
Charges of Management	-			15,101

At the East India House.

India Stock	-	-		4,000,000
Annual interest paid half-yearly				126,000
Charges of management	-			1,687
Irredeemable annuities at the Exchequer—paid half-yearly there, and at the Bank	-	-		1,309,540
Charges of management	-			29,000

Unfunded debt, since funded at 5 per cent with ten millions on the closing of the war account				18,000,000
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FRESH STATEMENT FOR 1790,  
by Sir John Sinclair, Bart. and  
M. P.

-	-			247,833,236
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Annual interest to be paid half-yearly	-	-	-	9,469,117
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Annual

Annual charge on the subjects of Great Britain.

Interest of the national debt	9,469,117
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The peace establishment for 1791, including the king's civil list, the army, navy, ordnance, militia, miscellaneous services, increased plantation expences, and Hessian subsidy, was	4,937,274
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Total of the national expenditure yearly	14,406,391
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The provision for this annual expenditure, consisted in the produce of the customs and excises, and of various taxes imposed on different periods. Formerly, certain taxes were appropriated to pay the interests of specific principal sums borrowed; but by sundry acts of parliament for consolidating several principal sums, bearing the same rate of interest, into one fund, the taxes have likewise been carried to one general account for the payment of all the annual interests, and are thereby made perpetual, unless the principals are redeemed.— This arose from the following circumstance. Many of the taxes, under former administrations, fell short of producing the sums they were calculated to produce, when stated to the house of commons by the ministers in their budgets;

budgets ; and consequently, not being adequate to the sum required for the annual interest of the loan, for which they were levied, the deficiency was obliged to be made good out of the *sinking fund*, or it was taken from the next supplies granted by parliament. To remedy this defect, the total surplusses of the revenue, unappropriated, have been made responsible for all such demands.

This subject will be more amply discussed in explaining the nature of the *Aggregate and Sinking Funds*.

But during Mr. Pitt's administration of the finances, the increase of the produce of the customs and excises, with the addition of new taxes, and a rigorous execution of the revenue laws, have raised the annual income of the nation one million, and in some years, near one million and a half above the annual expenditure. One million of this surplus is by an act of parliament of the year 1784, vested in the hands of commissioners, to be applied *inviolably*, to the sole purpose of *liquidating*, that is to say, redeeming so much of the principal sums of the national debt ; and the annual interests saved by such liquidation, is carried to the account of the general surplusses, to increase the power of that fund, to continue to make such annual liquidations.

According

According to this system, it is not proposed to cancel any considerable portion of the taxes, in a less term than twenty-eight, or thirty years.

The peace establishment would be more than amply provided for, by the annual grants of the land and malt taxes, and the produce of the customs, without laying more burthens on the people: We may therefore judge with what reluctance a good king and his ministers involve the nation in a war, which must always add to the oppressive weight of the taxes to pay the interests of new loans. It is to times of war then, that we must refer for the various, great effects of the *public credit* of the nation, which has enabled the crown to carry on such extensive and chargeable wars as those of 1744, 1755, 1776, and 1793. Soon after the conclusion of a peace, the value of money diminishes, and in proportion that of the *Funds*, commonly called the *Stocks* rises: then, money may be obtained by private persons, on government securities, *viz.* the funds, or on mortgages, at three, and three and a half per cent.

But as soon as a war breaks out, and it is known that the minister will want extra supplies, to be raised by loans from the public, the monied men sell out of the old funds, which makes them fall, in order to be ready to subscribe to the new, on more advantageous terms. And year after year, whilst a war continues,  
the



the terms on which government is obliged to raise money become more and more disadvantageous: its value rises above 5 per cent., that is to say, you must give 5 *l.* yearly interest, for the loan of 100 *l.* with the best security, till you repay the principal.

In the course of the American war, the value of money arose gradually, to more than 5 per cent. but as there is an act of parliament, which limits lawful interest to 5 per cent., and makes all contracts for giving more, *usurious*: Lord North was obliged to have recourse to various expedients, in his annual loans. That of the year 1781, being the most disadvantageous to the nation, may be given as a striking example.

The sum borrowed was 12,000,000.

Every subscriber of 100*l.* was allowed 150*l.* 3 per cent annuities, to be consolidated with the old funds, bearing the same rate of interest, and transferrable at the bank of England.

This created a new debt to posterity of - - - - - 18,000,000

They were likewise allowed 25 l. in 4 per cent. consolidated annuities for every 100 l. subscribed, thereby creating another new debt of - 3,000,000

Sum raised 12,000,000, capital given 21,000,000

And the people taxed to pay the interest.

Nor

Nor was this all, for every subscriber of 1,000*l.* was allowed four state lottery tickets, paying 10*l.* for every ticket, but from the advantageous scheme of the lottery, supposed to be worth 14 or 15*l.* This loan raised a general clamour, and greatly contributed to the removal of Lord North, the following year.

The calculation made by the monied men, who subscribed to the loan was as follows :

150*l.* in 3 per cents, worth at market only                    -                    -                    84   0   0

3 per cent annuities being then at 56 per cent.

25 l. in 4 per cents, worth      -    16 10 0

$\frac{1}{10}$ th of the profit on four lottery tickets, for every 100*l.* subscribed      2   0   0

102 10 0

A premium of £. 2 : 10 for the advance of 100 *l.* when the lenders were to run the risk of the stocks falling still lower, by the continuance of the war, appeared to be very moderate; but a very few days demonstrated that Lord North, and Sir Grey Cooper his secretary, had either been miserably duped, or had extravagantly favoured their private friends at the public expence. For it rose to 11 per cent premium at the stock exchange; and during the

last peace, the 3 per cents rose to 90 *l.*, and the 4 per cents in proportion, so that the original subscribers to this prodigal loan, who kept their funds till such rise happened, made a profit of 42 *l.* per cent. besides the annual interest of their money.

When the loans were made without a lottery, other *douceurs* were given, particularly, *small* annuities for *one* or two lives, or for a certain number of years.

The subscribers to all the loans, have likewise constantly had another advantage. The money subscribed is paid only by instalments, at intervals of six weeks from one payment to another, and the first deposit at the time of subscribing is seldom more than 10 per cent. ; for this small deposit, receipts are issued out, with blanks for filling up the subsequent payments; by which means a subscriber holds a receipt or acknowledgement of 1,000 *l.* for 100 *l.* paid in; and if the value of the loan rises, between the first and second payments, he may sell it at the stock exchange, with a profit on the nominal sum.

The final payment is never made in less than ten, and sometimes not till twelve months after the time of subscribing. When all is paid in, the receipts are exchanged for certificates, acknowledging the parties to be entitled to such sums as they have subscribed, in 3 or 4 per cent. transferrable annuities, together with the  
rate

rate of interest thereon, payable half-yearly, by dividend warrants.

While the loan is in circulation, before all the payments are made, it is called *scrip*; and it is this *scrip*, which opens the door to unlimited stock-jobbing during its currency.

## LECTURE IV.

ON STOCK-JOBING, CONSIDERED AS A CONSEQUENCE OF PUBLIC CREDIT, AND OF THE FUNDING SYSTEM.

THIS is an evil of the first magnitude, yet, it has been found hitherto impracticable to apply an adequate remedy, without injuring the public credit of the funds, by checking the operations of the open market for them at the stock-exchange. It is an abuse springing out of the extensive credit of the nation. For great numbers of foreigners, are not only proprietors of the old funds, but likewise either subscribers to, or purchasers of considerable sums in every new loan; so that they become creditors deeply interested in the national debt; and the chief corps of foreigners concerned in them are the Dutch, both as individuals, and in communities.

The free liberty granted to all foreigners, to buy into, or to sell out of our public funds at pleasure, gave birth to time-bargains: that is to say, to contracts made to transfer, or to accept any portion of property in them, at a fixed, future period (usually three months after the date

date of the bargain) at the current price of the day, when it was made.

This makes the English funds bear a certain price every day, on the Exchange at Amsterdam, as well as at London ; and the prices, in time of war, being governed by the state of public affairs, the agents for the Dutch proprietors in the old funds, or for the purchasers into the new, receive their orders to act according to circumstances. All their commissions of course are confidential and secret. Suppose the English have gained a considerable advantage over their enemies : this raises the price of the funds, as soon as the good news are confirmed by authority. If the event happens on the continent, the Dutchman gets intelligence of it, before it is generally known in England ; and he writes to his agent to sell out 10,000 l. 3 per cent. consolidated annuities at the price to which he conjectures they will rise, when the news becomes public, to be transferred three months after the day, on which the bargain is made.

The agent watches the best opportunity, and employs a *broker* to sell, who will readily find in the open market, another *broker* who will agree to buy—the contract is then concluded by each broker entering it in his book. Thus, Feb. 1st. *A.* sells to *B.* 10,000 l. 3 per cent. at 69 per cent. *B.* bought of *A.* 10,000 l. 3 per cent. at 69 per cent. for *May*. Here the matter rests till May, when  
the



the quarterly *rescounters*, which means the settling of accounts, takes place.

We will now suppose some very bad news, or the ministry wanting to borrow a large sum on a new loan, has happened, between February and May; either of those circumstances would cause the price of the old funds to fall; let us say, 3 per cent. *viz.* to 66. In that case, A. who agreed to sell at 69, might replace his stock at 66, and put 30*l.* in his pocket; and B. if he did not chuse to take the stock he had agreed to buy, would lose 30*l.* in settling the account. But if he resolved to take it, and to keep it till a future rise, A. would find some other person of whom he would purchase, to deliver it and from him, receive the difference between 66, and 69. The whole of this transaction is perfectly fair and honest, “for every man has a right to make the most he can of his property.” And if I sell my horse for thirty guineas one day, and repenting of having parted with him, go to the new owner and get him to agree to let me have him again at thirty-three guineas; so that I pay the difference, it is of no consequence, whether, in the interval, my groom has, or has not delivered him. Or if I buy a horse at thirty guineas, and before it is delivered to me, another person, who has seen it offers to give me thirty three, if I chuse to put three guineas in my pocket, I have only to desire the seller to deliver it to my order,

it

it being of no consequence to him, whether the first or second purchaser gets possession of the horse. Just so it is, with respect to time bargains in the funds, and the *rescounter* settlements; for it very seldom happens that A. and B. the first contractors either deliver or take, that is to say, either *transfer* or *accept* in the books at the bank, the 10,000*l.* entered as bought and sold in their own books—all they have to do, is to settle their account, by paying or receiving the difference in the prices.

But the mischief is, that under the mask of secrecy, similar transactions may take place to the amount of millions, and yet the parties concerned may not be owners of one shilling of property, either in the old funds, nor in any new loan; and this is that *gambling* at the stock-exchange, which ruins numbers of people every year, and is productive of the worst consequences to the public.

These transactions are declared to be illegal by an act of parliament, “to prevent the iniquitous practice of stock-jobbing;” and no debt accruing from stock-jobbing accounts is recoverable at law. 7th *George II*, A. D. 1734.

But this disadvantage does not prevent daily *gambling* to an incredible amount in all the funds; and as the greatest variations, in a course of years, have happened in *East India stock*, owing to the frequent revolutions in the Com-

pany's affairs at home and abroad ; the greatest fortunes have been *won* and *lost* by *jobbing* in that stock. Let us now explain the easy mode of conducting these gambling bargains, under the semblance of real contracts for time.

C. a considerable merchant, having had property in the funds, which he has occasionally sold out, and bought in again, has constantly employed one *broker* to transact this business. Having at last, a mind to job in the funds, he watches, what he thinks a favourable opportunity, the state of public affairs inducing him to think that we must very soon put an end to the war with France, and the debates in parliament at the opening of the session of 1801, confirming him in this idea, he orders his broker to buy for his account, in the month of February, 70,000*l.* 3 per cent. consols for the rescouters in May at 60 per cent. It is evident that the broker cannot know the extent of his employer's fortune, or connexions ; he may have commissions from his foreign correspondents, or he may be retiring from business, and be desirous to vest his whole property in the funds ; the broker cannot presume to ask any questions ; on the contrary, he gladly executes an order that will pay him a considerable sum for his commission. He therefore buys of some other broker, the above-mentioned quantity of 3 per cents, and thus the transaction is finished *pro tempore*.

*tempore.* The months of *March* and *April* pass away. The stocks fall, and no appearance of a peace; Mr. Pitt in the interval has raised a very large loan for the service of the current year; the monied men have made use of every artifice to lower the value of the old funds, that they might make the better terms with the minister.

C. begins to be very uneasy, he frequently goes to the stock-exchange, and asks his broker, if there is no prospect that stocks will rise; the broker shakes his head, and assures him, that they must fall still lower before the rescouters (the last day of May). The merchant now, for the first time, informs his broker, that he does not intend to take (accept) the stock he has bought for him: that it is a mere speculation; a jobbing adventure founded on the prospect of a peace, and asks his advice; what he had best do.

His answer will be, I would advise you sir, to sell the same quantity immediately, at the price of the day (suppose the 3d of May) and close the account, for I am afraid you will only make it worse by staying till the last day of settling.—The merchant consents, the broker goes to the stock-exchange and sells 70,000 l. 3 per cents. for the end of May, at 56 per cent. and the following will be the state of the account.

Israel the broker, bought for Mr.			
C. 70,000 l. 3 per cents. at 60.			
Sold again at	-	-	56,
Loss 4 per cent.	-	-	- 2,800 0 0
Commission for buying and sell-			
ing at 1-8th per cent.	-	-	87 10 0
			<hr/>
			£. 2,887 10 0

C. gives a draft upon his banker for the aforesaid sum; and consoles himself with the hope of speculating better another time.

But suppose the employer, not being so honest as C, refuses to pay the loss, the broker has no remedy, he must bear it himself, and settle the account with his brother broker, by paying the difference in the two prices; and if he either cannot, or will not do this, he becomes a *lame duck*, that is to say, he can no longer frequent the stock-exchange, nor do any more business on credit, with his brethren.

A stock-jobber in the situation of C. who has bought stock for time, which he never intended to take, is called at the stock exchange a **BULL**, loaded with a burthen he wants to shake off. On the contrary, he who has sold upon speculation, what he does not possess, and consequently cannot transfer, is called a **BEAR**, eager and hungry, trying to devour the property of others.

The first of these two parties wants the fund he has bought to rise, that he may sell

the same sum at an advanced price, and receive a profit, which is called, *the difference*. It is this man's interest to propagate false intelligence of victories, negotiations for peace, &c.

The second, on the contrary, will endeavour to obtain false news of defeats by sea and land, in order to lower the price of the fund he has sold on speculation, that he may have an opportunity of buying the same sum at a lower price, and thereby receiving a profit.

Thus by the various arts of the stock-jobbers real property is affected, and the rise or fall of the funds is regulated by the jobbing accounts at the stock-exchange, an evil of the first magnitude, for in the year 1766, upon intelligence from India, of some temporary advantages gained by the East India Company's governments in that country, the Directors at home, imprudently ventured to declare a dividend of 12 *per cent.* for the ensuing year, which set the jobbers in that stock to work, and gambling in India stock was carried to such a height, that 100 l. property in that fund, rose to the value of 270 l. at market, when parliament was obliged to interfere, and to pass an act to limit the dividends in future, and to compel the directors to rescind their aforesaid declaration. In 1773, the same stock sunk to 140 l.

The greatest part of the national debt, consisting of 3 per cent. consol. annuities, in which the most



business is daily transacted, the greatest jobbing and the most frequent variations happen in that fund.

All ranks of people, and of both sexes, engage more or less in stock-jobbing, through the persuasions of their brokers; especially if they are known by transferring, or by purchasing, to have considerable property in the funds. But foreigners invested with public characters, and persons connected with them, have the best opportunities of playing a sure game, by means of early intelligence, and as they generally carry their gains out of the country; this is another great evil.

Commerce likewise suffers considerably by stock-jobbing, for tradesmen are tempted by the hope of more rapid profits than they can make in their shops, to frequent the stock-exchange, and not being in the secret of obtaining true intelligence respecting public affairs, they lose, instead of gaining; and become fraudulent bankrupts.

## LECTURE V.

ON THE SINKING FUND AND OTHER SCHEMES  
FOR PAYING OFF, OR DIMINISHING THE NA-  
TIONAL DEBT.

FROM the time, when the national debt began to increase to so considerable a sum in capitals, that it was apprehended the annual interests paid thereon, would bear too hard upon the ingenuity and industry of the manufacturing and trading subjects of the kingdom; and that it was adopted as part of the system of our finances, to perpetuate taxes which had been imposed originally, under the idea of being only temporary; it was natural to suppose that various plans would be offered to government for paying off the whole, in a course of years, or a considerable part, in a short space of time, of the capitals, in order to lessen the annual interest, and to abolish in proportion, the taxes appropriated for the payment of the interest of certain capital sums borrowed in past times.

At the death of queen Anne, the national debt was only 54 *millions*, and little or no notice

was taken of such a trifling incumbrance. But, in the 2d year of George I, 1716, the debt being increased considerably, a plan was produced in the house of commons by Sir Robert Walpole, the minister of the finances, for paying it off gradually, by the creation of a new fund to be called the sinking fund ; and this scheme being adopted, passed into a law. Before the establishment of this fund, there had existed many similar small funds ; that is to say, such duties, excises, and taxes as had been provided for paying the interests of particular loans, but which produced surplusses had been formed into separate accounts of savings reserved for the purpose of reducing, and finally redeeming the national debt. The *aggregate fund*, was the name given to this separate account of all the surplusses, excesses, or in other words, of the unappropriated income of the state. It was called the *aggregate fund*, because it was a collection of many things incorporated into one mass or body ; and it comprehended not only all the overplus of the rates and taxes appropriated to the payment of the interests of the capitals of the Bank, South Sea, and India stocks, but all other articles of the public revenue, producing any surplus, above the sum it was destined to pay by annual grants of parliament. *The king's civil list*, or royal revenue alone, was exempted from this account ; it consisted at that time of *seventeen* articles,  
*viz.*

*viz.* tonnage and poundage, hereditary or temporary excises, letter money, fines of alienation, seizures, confiscations, compositions, rents of crown lands, &c. calculated to produce 800,000*l.* per annum; and if they produced more, the surplus equally belonged to the sovereign: but owing to *smuggling*, and similar causes, they frequently fell short of the above sum, and in the reign of George II. so much so, that parliament at sundry times supplied the defect, by granting to his late Majesty, considerable sums to make good such deficiencies.

In consequence of this uncertainty in the civil list establishment, on the accession of his present Majesty, all the articles composing the former royal revenue were given up to the public; and a permanent annual revenue of 800,000*l.* was settled upon the king for life, by act of parliament, payable quarterly out of the aggregate fund, to the general account of which, those articles are now carried which formerly supplied the civil list, and parliament has since granted an additional 100,000*l.* per annum to his Majesty, on account of his numerous family.

This alteration saves a great deal of trouble in keeping the public accounts of the nation, and it changes the nature of *smuggling*: formerly, disaffected people made no scruple to cheat the king, it was only a personal injury; at present, this commercial fraud is committed against the public at large.

It

It having been customary for ministers, from time to time, to apply the surplusses of the *aggregate fund* to the current services of the year, or to some extraordinary demand at the commencement of a war, instead of applying them to the reduction of the national debt, it was enacted by the statute of 1716, “ That  
 “ whatever surplus remains upon any, or upon  
 “ all the rates and duties which constitute the  
 “ public revenue, after payment of the interests  
 “ they stand charged with, shall be carried to a  
 “ separate and distinct account or fund, known  
 “ by the name of the *sinking fund*—All the  
 “ savings and surplus are to be reserved, and  
 “ kept *most sacredly*, for the valuable purpose  
 “ only, of reducing, lessening, and *sinking*, (from  
 “ which circumstance the fund took its name)  
 “ and paying off gradually, the *national debt*,  
 “ and to, or for none other use, intent or purpose whatever.”

Notwithstanding this sacred inviolability of the sinking fund, only three millions of the national debt were paid off, during the long administration of Sir Robert Walpole, and he, who had proposed and obtained the establishment of this fund had the boldness to alienate it from its sacred destination. For in 1729, he obtained an act of parliament to enable him to take 1,100,000*l.* from the sinking fund, and to apply it to the service of that year. Again, in 1735,  
 9th Geo

9th Geo. II. 1,000,000*l.* more was taken from the same fund, for the service of that year: it is true, there was always a saving clause annexed to these alienations, by enacting that the sums borrowed from the sinking fund should be replaced from the grants of the following session; but ministers very well knew, that the increasing demands on the state, occasioned by successive wars, would never allow them to refund the said sums. And this practice of applying the produce of the sinking fund, in times of war, to the current services of different years continued till the peace of 1783, and therefore, the whole plan of a sacred sinking fund was annihilated.

In 1750, though the debt was doubled from the time of Queen Anne, yet, we, who have seen it rise to 500 millions, cannot but be surprised that a debt of only 80 millions should have excited such universal discontent and murmuring throughout the kingdom at that time. But as the people knew that the taxes which had been laid upon them temporarily to pay the interest of the debt, had been made permanent in 1716, the better to enable the sinking fund to diminish the national debt, they were sadly disappointed when they found that all hopes of paying off the debt, and finally relieving them from those taxes, were totally at an end, by the alienations of the sacred fund. Then it was that the celebrated David Hume increased the alarm, by his  
unguarded



unguarded assertion in his Political Essays, “ that if ever the debt should amount to 100 millions, either the nation must destroy *public credit*, or public credit would destroy the nation.”

To quiet the minds of the people, Andrew Hooke, an eminent merchant, and an able accountant, published an *Essay on the National Debt, and the National Capital*, which was very agreeable both to the ministry and to the people; for he dispelled all the gloomy apprehensions of an approaching national bankruptcy, by demonstrating that the then existing national debt of 80 millions, was only as one to twelve, to the national capital in land, money, wrought-plate, jewels, bullion, live and dead stock—as four to five, to the annual income of the nation, and only as one to seven to the annual increment of the national capital.

But his plan for paying off the debt was not adopted for the following reasons.

1. He had proved in his Essay, that redeeming the capital was not of that consequence which people generally imagined.

2. His proposal to extinguish it by converting the whole into life annuities, offered no relief from the existing taxes until the expiration of *ninety-eight years*; and in the mean time, seven and a half *per cent.* annual interest was to be paid in consideration of sinking the capital which would have obliged government to lay on new taxes.

Mr.

Mr. Pinto, a Dutchman soon after the peace of 1763, published another plan for redeeming the national debt, by an augmentation of the sinking fund, and the conversion of different portions of the capitals into life annuities at seven and a half per cent. ; but we have already observed, that the heavy taxes of late years have made ministers afraid of augmenting them, by the creation of funds bearing high annual interests ; this scheme therefore was rejected.

The last publication of any note upon the subject was by the late Dr. Price ; he recommends different applications of the growing progress of the sinking fund.

1. The interests disengaged by the redemption from time to time, of any portions of the capitals, may be themselves applied to the payment of further portions of the capitals.

2. They may be expended on current services.

3. They may be annihilated by abolishing the taxes producing them.

The first of these projects has been adopted by Mr. Pitt, as has been already noticed ; and in pursuance of his plan, the commissioners have bought up or redeemed the sum of 44,733,294*l*.

I shall venture to recommend another system, which I hope under the present new minister of the Finances may be adopted.

Supported

Supported by the authorities of Hooke, Sir James Stewart, and Pinto, I maintain the inexpediency of paying off such trifling sums as *one million* a year, which cannot produce any good effect either to government or to the people; especially, as no diminution of taxes is proposed in a less term than twenty-eight or thirty years; the interests discharged being carried to the sinking fund.

Indeed, if fifteen or twenty millions of capitals could be redeemed at one stroke, interest of money would be reduced under three *per cent.* which would be a considerable advantage to government, when future wars should require future loans.

Or, if the interest yearly saved by redeeming only one million annually, occasioned a proportional abolition of the taxes on the necessities of life, affecting our manufacturing and trading poorer classes of the people, it would be a great alleviation of their burthens, and would enable them to bear more cheerfully, the revival of such taxes in times of war.

But, as neither of these measures formed any part of Mr. Pitt's chaostical system, I must insist, that the most beneficial method of applying the surplusses of the sinking fund, since it is not judged expedient to abolish any considerable portion of burthensome taxes, would have been the adoption of a finance principle of the ancients,

cients, by providing for the expences of war in times of peace. According to this plan, the annual surplusses above the annual expenditure, should have been formed into a new fund called the WAR fund, guaranteed by parliament, to have been kept sacred and inviolable, for the sole purpose of defraying the expences of the first two or three years of any future wars: which, together with the application of the same surplusses, during a war, to the payment of the interest of any unavoidable new loans, would have been sufficient for carrying on a war of seven years, upon honest and economical principles, without new taxes.

Had such an application been made of the millions employed by the commissioners for reducing the national debt, from 1786 to 1793, when the war with France took place, neither loans nor taxes would have been wanted for the two first years of that expensive war, still unhappily existing.

Finally, to shew the necessity of adopting some new, great and extensive plan of finances, to liberate the people from the weight of taxes already made permanent, and to dispel their fears of future heavy taxes, I shall here recite, part of the *eleventh report* of the commissioners appointed by parliament to examine, take and state the public accounts of the nation, delivered to the house of commons at the close of the year 1783.

“ A plan

“ A plan must be formed for the reduction of  
“ the national debt, which is swelled to such a  
“ magnitude, that it requires the united efforts  
“ of the ablest heads and purest hearts, to suggest  
“ the proper and effectual means of reduction.

“ The evil does not admit of *procrastination*,  
“ *palliatives*, or *expedients* ; it presses on, and  
“ must be met with force and firmness.

“ The subjects of this kingdom are opulent,  
“ generous and public spirited ; let the distresses  
“ of their country be fairly laid before them,  
“ and they will contribute cheerfully and liberally to its relief.

“ Every man may dedicate a portion of his  
“ income, or some share of his affluence, according to his faculties, to this great national object. A part must be sacrificed to preserve the remainder.”

Very true ; and may I be permitted to add, that the nation must look up to the great and wealthy subjects for salvation ; for it cannot be effected by the slow operation of applying even five millions annually, to the reduction of five hundred millions.

But the former objections to converting the capitals of the redeemable life annuities, or of raising the future supplies that may be required if the present unfortunate war is continued to another year, no longer subsist, for the new minister of the finances may apply the produce of  
the

the income tax, when it is released from Mr. Pitt's mortgage, to the payment of the interests on life annuities. Or, should the blessing of peace be sooner restored to our distressed country, the unfunded debt of the war, may be thus liquidated, instead of adding to the enormous sum of the capitals of the national debt, and imposing new taxes to pay the interest.

It is really matter of surprise, that whilst daily applications are making to the different proprietary offices which grant life annuities, they should be left in the quiet enjoyment of one of the most profitable branches of money transactions; especially at a time, when every nerve ought to be strained in the revenue department of government, to relieve persons of moderate fortunes from the pressure of the times: the deduction from small incomes, and such I call 200 l. *per annum*, are attempted to be balanced by the purchase of life annuities, to the great emolument of these offices. Surely, some means might be devised to throw these profits into the hands of government, for the public benefit.

The extra supplies in time of war, must be raised by some mode within the year, for the service of which they are granted; so as to leave no debt on the next, much less on posterity; otherwise the deranged state of our finances, it is to be feared, must sooner or later, bring on dreadful convulsions in the body politic. Un-



doubtedly, the exhausted state of the finances of France, was the primary cause of the subversion of the French monarchy, and to shew the disposition of great men to shift the burthen from their own shoulders; the author hopes he shall stand excused for introducing in this place, the following anecdote.

In the year 1787, I went to Paris, and taking with me letters of recommendation from the French, Russian, and American ambassadors at our court, and from several British noblemen and gentlemen, I was thereby introduced to the ministers of state at Versailles; and at a public dinner, at which were present the Archbishop of Tholouse, minister of the finances; and the unfortunate M. Montmorin, secretary of state for foreign affairs, who knew that I had translated Neckar's Treatises on the administration of the finances of France, I was asked, "What I thought of the then actual state of their financial resources." My reply was, "My lords, and gentlemen, something more effectual than your present measures must be immediately done, to extricate the nation, as well as the court, from its present embarrassments." The notables had just granted a contribution of one fourth of their annual incomes for one year, to supply the immediate wants of the king's civil establishment.

They

They next questioned me, respecting the receipt tax, as to its reception by the public, and its produce.

Second reply—"It was generally well received, it was first levied by a wise and moderate administration, it was equitable, it never was burthensome, and is very productive. The determination of the parliament of Paris not to register your sovereign's edict for a similar tax astonished me." The result of this conversation was, a prevailing opinion, that their finances would last their time! In opposition to this light sentiment—I declared to M. Montmorin, in a private audience, that I feared, in their then situation, they would not support the government during his time!

Fatal prediction! the verification of which I had reason to apprehend from the general discontent, and from the unguarded expressions of disaffection to the government, delivered in most companies of persons of rank and fortune, by whom I had the honour to be politely received, in consequence of recommendatory letters. This freedom of conversation upon political subjects, so different from what I had been taught to expect in France, alarmed me, I saw a storm impending, but of what nature, I could not pretend to divine, however, it induced me to return home, in less than two months.

## LECTURE VI.

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS ON TAXATION;  
AND FINAL STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL  
DEBT.

TAXES on the luxuries of life, as they must bear chiefly upon the opulent, are often proposed by speculators, but seldom adopted by ministers, because, such taxes, unless they are exorbitant, will not be materially productive. The tax on silver plate yielded little more than the expence of officers salaries, and other incidents for collecting it; and was therefore repealed.

The tax on wheel carriages is the only one that has proved abundantly productive. But taxes on articles of general consumption are preferred, because, though not always necessities, the mass of the people will have them. A remarkable instance of this, may be observed in the following article.

*One penny* per gallon, additional excise on British made spirits laid on in the year 1792,  
and

and made permanent in 1793, was stated by Mr. Pitt, in his budget for that year; to produce 112,000 l. a year! Wretched must be the debauchery of the lower orders of the people, since the consumption of the most pernicious of all kinds of spirits, produces an almost incredible annual revenue! and miserable indeed, the state of the finances of any kingdom, when they depend for their support, on the intoxication of its labouring hands!

By this consumption of spirituous liquors, the average term of human life (computing from the age of majority) in London, and its environs, is reduced to 55 years of age.

Partial taxes should be avoided; of this nature was the shop tax laid on by Mr. Pitt, and repealed, on the representations made to parliament against it. It fell extremely heavy upon the shop-keepers of London and Westminster, for it was laid on the rents of shops independent of the houses; and the rent of a shop in Cheapside, or the Strand, is more than ten times the rent of a shop in any market town in England.

It is a false maxim—"that all our taxes fall ultimately upon the landed estates;" lands having been raised in value of late years, beyond all proportion to the additional taxes which may be supposed directly or indirectly to affect them.

For instance, a gentleman of the author's acquaintance came to his paternal estate, by the death

death of his father in 1796. The leases for twenty-one years, had just expired, and amongst other augmentations, the young gentleman, raised a farm from *one* to *three hundred* pounds a year : query—What proportion do the increased taxes levied on this gentleman by government, bear to his increase of rent imposed on his tenant ? But unfortunately there is a fashion in literature as well as in dress—and the rage for reading and adopting the fallacious principles of Dr. Adam Smith, in his too much celebrated work on the Wealth of Nations, has misled many shallow, political arithmeticians. It is therefore with great satisfaction, I have read a late most excellent refutation of the Doctor's strongest arguments ; in a pamphlet intitled, *The Essential Principles of the Wealth of Nations, illustrated in opposition to some false doctrines of Dr. Adam Smith, and others.\** The writer, a most respectable member of society, and who has had the best opportunities for acquiring a thorough knowledge of his subject ; from prudential motives, has concealed his name, but his arguments are unanswerable, *viz.* “ That the real permanent Wealth of Nations consists in the most fertile produce of its soil ; in the highest state of cultivation—that agriculture therefore, ought to be more attended to in the united kingdom of Great Britain, than it has been of late years—

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that

that the encouragement to be given to this parent of all other arts, ought to be much greater than that which is preferably bestowed upon manufactures and commerce, and that the principal revenue of the state *is not*, but should be derived from the produce of its soil, and, that it is a wild conclusion to ‘substitute the unstable and transient revenue arising from commerce, for the permanent and secure revenue arising from the cultivation of territory.’

On these principles, he recommends the cultivation of every acre of waste land in England, Scotland, and Ireland; demonstrates that the profits arising from cultivation greatly exceed those derived from manufactures and foreign commerce; and enforces the necessity of drawing the whole of the national supplies in all cases, from the rents of lands, as those rents afford an ample fund for every supposed case of emergency; since the sum of *twenty-five millions* sterling, making between one third and one fourth of the whole income of Great Britain is paid by the cultivators to the proprietors of land.

All authors on the subject of the finances of England, foreigners as well as natives, complain of the inequality of the land-tax, and they call it not only a partial, but likewise an oppressive tax; because an equal rate would produce a considerable increase of revenue,



nue, and would relieve the people from some of those heavy taxes, on the first necessities of life, which at present oppress them.

Arthur Young allows, that rents in Norfolk are now four times higher than they were forty years ago, yet the land tax has not been increased; and our sensible, anonymous author, on the subject of an equal assessment of the land tax declares, upon good information, that a gentleman possessing an estate of 5000l. a year in one of the northern counties of England, pays in land tax, at four shillings in the pound, only 75l. which is not more than *four-pence*, instead of four shillings in the pound. As the number of landed gentlemen who are aggrieved by the present very disproportionate assessment, far exceeds the number of those who are thereby unjustly favoured, it is most reasonable that this unfair advantage of the minority, should give way to that of the majority. This majority therefore, have a right to press for an equal valuation of the land-tax without delay, that the minority, who are now almost exempt, may bear an equal share of the public burdens with themselves.

When government lays on any additional tax upon articles of consumption, great care should be taken that wholesale, and retail dealers, do not double it upon the poor people who consume the article taxed. Surely, some mode might  
be

be adopted by parliament, to prevent this fraudulent plan of doubling the weight of every new tax.

Life annuities and tontines, are the surest, and most speedy resources for reducing the national debt, by such large sums at a time, as will lower the interest of money; and thereby raise the value at market, of the several capitals constituting the funded debt.

FINAL STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL DEBT,  
IN CAPITALS AND ANNUAL INTEREST.

Our former statement, page 407, brought up the account to the year 1792. The following year, Great Britain was impolitically involved in a complicated and expensive war, ostensibly, against the new republic of France, but comprising a coalition, and subsidiary treaties with German Potentates; which gave birth in that year, to the enormous debts since contracted to carry on that war, and which has increased the burthens of the people to a degree barely supportable; for the lower classes of the community have been obliged to sacrifice most of the comforts of life, which they had formerly enjoyed; and from the additional calamity of an unprecedented, exorbitant high price of bread, and other articles of food, have been reduced to the bare necessaries, which they can scarcely purchase for themselves and families.

The prospect of peace, and of a more economical system of financial administration, afford the only remaining hopes of the return of plenty, and of the abolition of some of the most oppressive *war* taxes.

The Capital, or Principal of the permanent public Debts on the 5th of January 1793, amounted to 205,826,403

The funded debt created by the war from 1793        -        -        - 173,699,343

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To the 1st Feb. 1800, amounted 379,525,746

Loan for the service of that year 18,500,746

Ditto for 1801, £.28,000,000, for }  
*which was given in 3 per cent. funds* } 49,210,000

To which must be added the value of the irredeemable annuities, }  
 for long and short terms, about } 15,000,000

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£. 462,236,492\*

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Annual interest and charges of management in 1793        -        - 10,325,000

In 1801, about        -        - 24,854,873

To be paid by the people, from customs, excises, old and new taxes.

\* *The unfunded debt, will make the total amount, upwards of 500,000,000 l.*

THE END.

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